# KOREAN IMMIGRANT FATHERS AND ACCULTURATION

# FROM AN ADULT LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative research study focused on Asian fathers living in the United States. It raised issues about the social perceptions of minority immigrants and provided alternative interpretations of the acculturation of Korean fathers who have been neglected in diverse social and educational discourses. In particular, this study looked at recent Korean immigrants who settled in America after 2008. By doing so, this work demonstrated the distinct demographical and socioeconomic hallmarks (e.g., better educational opportunities, economic prosperity, and cultural openness) of immigration in the United States.

This study is organized into two sections: a general survey which gathered information about current issues and marginalization and clarified the stereotypes facing Korean immigrants; and in-depth interviews and participative observations which collected stories and reflections from and about Korean immigrant fathers. I endeavored to (a) observe the Korean father, the family member who is most neglected by academic discourse on immigrant families; (b) identify the concerns of the modern, minority

immigrant; and (c) collect the voices of people who undergo acculturation or transformative adaptation of a new culture.

The overall significance of this study is that it presents new understanding of the life patterns of Korean fathers who reside in the United States. Research participants showed a tendency to emphasize the role of a social safety network board for racial community while being individualistic in personal matters. Moreover, the social position of fathers has changed internally and externally. Internal changes engendered through specific social conditions such as identity, parenting, religion, father awareness, and food rituals and memory were analyzed as the main factors for completing the overall transformation.

Lastly, the personal experiences or traits that appeared in the process of memory and consciousness were essential for creating the defining qualities of fathers in perceptions of the Korean father figure. Through a descriptive analysis, I uncovered what the four participants, who had different immigration trajectories, shared as commonalities and differences. Transformation by factors other than culture seemed to be an important variable. The interviewees' anecdotes confirmed the roles of memory and individual response to a complex series of cultural adaptations and provided important implications.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to the three most important women of my life.

My mother, Go, Jeomrye,

My wife, Lee, Hyunju

My only daughter, Choi, Hyeri

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# Chapter I

# INTRODUCTION

At the opening of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Metro New York area, a good friend of mine shared a story about the Los Angeles riots, which evoked distinct memories of Koreans, particularly Korean fathers. These images and figures of Koreans from old video clips depicted moments in which the fathers carried important meaning as the last bastion of the family. In sharing his memories of the horrific scenes, my friend said the men proudly held guns to protect their families. I, too, have been a father for 7 years now and have trouble defining the right way to raise my children in the United States while accommodating various social roles as an ordinary male living at the present moment. Hence, this research is, in a sense, a monologue about fatherhood that I, as well as many others, experience as minority immigrant fathers.

When I first started playing my own father's role, the question I asked each time was, "I am playing this role correctly?" Immigrants tend to be forced to act as ordinary adults who have a deficit of the ability to identify the proper role—much like an astronaut who has landed on an unexplored planet. The perception of the father, established through various processes of self-identification, was, in itself, a general conceptualization structure, yet at the same time it was a very personal and original consciously conducted activity. Therefore, the most important questions of this study are: Who is the Korean

immigrant father, and what are key provocative factors for Korean immigrants in daily life?

Additional questions address a father's various social qualities, for example, differences from longer-time immigrant fathers currently in the United States (immigration generation), or differences from fathers in Korea (region). Lastly, what realities are reflected in the daily lives of Korean fathers?

Studies of Korean immigrants have been marginalized in many ways. There are too few Koreans to constitute a mainstream minority immigrant group, studied for their thematic importance, and, as Min (2011) pointed out, when minority immigrant studies emerged in academic discourse in the late 19th century, feminism and cultural diversity were in the mainstream, an academic focus that minimized the importance of Korean males as research subjects.

The tendency has been to stigmatize Korean immigrant men as a negative symbol of acculturation and as the gatekeepers of the new social order, making them cultural "leftovers." In the early stages of immigration studies, the perception of the father was negative or regressive (Chuang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2009; Jain & Belsky, 1997; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Kim; 2002; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Min, 2001; Shimon, Este, & Clark, 2003). Additionally, many studies (Cao, 2005; Das & Kemp, 1997; Kwak & Berry, 2001) showed that the presentation of the father figure in the Asian family in many studies relied on a rigid, preexisting conceptualization of an old and authoritarian character who creates social conflicts. Interestingly, current Asian gender studies are infused with feminism, which contributes to bias in the overall concept of the father.

For instance, Noh, Wu, Speechley, and Kaspar (1992) found that the preexisting world order (gender role and demands on that role) within the immigrant family intensified a sensation of oppression in Korean immigrant women. Min (2001) and Hondagneu-Sotelo (1999) noted that the Korean cultural perception of immigration tended to victimize women, widening the gap between social and family position. Furthermore, Das and Kemp (1997) found that rigid gender roles, intensification of religious beliefs, and lack of community support intensify an adverse outcome in south Asian immigrant families.

Unlike problems that appear internally, factors of self-reflection and the acknowledgment of class difference in Western society gender roles, the understanding of cultural tendency (both cultural relativism and cultural absolutism) is an external factor. Kincaid (2013) pointed out that the heterogeneous appearance of Asian culture was often presented in research from the West, along with the fact that the foundation of Eastern culture has different inclinations about fundamental concepts such as ownership and cultural and social structure. At the same time, Sardar (1994) described a “fossilized” sense of culture, generated by minority immigrants, that determines stigmatized immigration types.

Moreover, the perception of the father as a primary research subject is rather new, even in academic discourse. An incidental focus existed in the study of the family, but it was not until the late 20th century that the full-fledged study of the father began (Lamb, 1977). Randles (2020) maintained that the U.S. political implications of the father’s involvement in the family reinforced his indispensable role. This perspective encourages the redefinition of a good father, focusing more on “patriarchal privilege” than economic

prosperity, yet such an approach risks failing to distinguish gender inequality in a patriarchal society.

Lamb (2008) stated that globalization has brought about diverse migration trajectories, the goal of which is to seek a better life and a means to escape persecution and hopelessness. However, most aspects of human migration tend to have multiple paths. Hence, the oversimplification of unidimensional population shifts from industrial countries to advanced countries hardly explains multidirectional migration in the European Union and most Western countries. In fact, Asians as a group (Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese), comprise the dominant number of immigrants in the United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2020).

Earlier research (Berry, 2008; Lamb, 2008) necessarily is limited in understanding current Asian society through the lens of the 2008 global financial crisis, as Asian countries have experienced an extensive, in-depth transformation of both the society and the individual.

Meanwhile, Frascarolo-Moutinot (1994) disentangled the different layers of the term *new fathers* through comparative research on new and traditional fathers. He concluded that playfulness, regarded as the core value of the new fathers, could be observed from the old fathers. However, social variables such as the spouse's financial involvement and the cognitive mindset of the family have been altered significantly. In addition, parental behaviors have affected this direction. For example, the emergence of the dual-earner family has produced a drastic transition towards a more egalitarian perspective. Pleck and Masciadrelli (2004) found that male participants of the family are

impacted not only by their cognitive transformation but also by social factors, such as the spouse being engaged in paid employment, that change the family dynamic.

Given the overall challenges of defining normative families, identifying a "father figure" is even more complicated in discourse on the modern family. In a horizontal social order, the legal status of marriage becomes the normative criterion for classifying a man with a child as a father. However, the terminological interpretation of the legal legitimacy of the father may require significant modification, since the normative notion of marriage has transformed.

Therefore, current academic discourse may need to focus more on which societal features are being replicated or rejected by members of a minority immigrant society in the current waves of immigration and which archetypes can be identified for future generations to remember. Korean immigrant fathers represent an intriguing research subject through which to follow the trajectory of immigration and the transformation of social roles and to examine the notion that sustaining cultural diversity in the modern era will be the foundation of a healthy society.

## Who Is a Korean Immigrant?

Korean immigration history has had three noticeable waves in the historical record: the early 20th century, the Korean war, and the Immigration Act of 1965 (Min & Kim, 2010). The first stage of this immigrant history started at the beginning of the 20th century, when the Japanese colonizers of Korea sent low-skilled labor to sugar plantations in Hawaii. The first Korean immigrants were all males until the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 brought the picture bride to Hawaii (Kim, Kim, & Kelly, 2006).

The second influx of Korean immigration to the U.S., during the Korean War (1951-1964), involved significant alteration in the composition of immigrant groups as a result of a more family-based and humanitarian approach. Although professional competencies were part of the selection process for some immigrants, most people were war orphans with blood ties to U.S. servicemen.

The third influx was triggered by the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965, which greatly changed the general landscape of Korean population in the United States (Min, 1984, 1992, 2011). Moreover, like most minority immigration history (Simon, 1993), the last wave produced unprecedented population growth: approximately 10 times more people than in previous waves entered the United States, both as legal and illegal immigrants, bringing with them a subsequent enhancement of societal diversity.

Each phase of immigration (laborers, picture brides, war orphans, family reunions, personal opportunity) evinced distinct socioeconomic characteristics and consanguinity-based migration patterns. Above all, the growing population growth infused the cultural understanding of American society with Korean influence and encouraged the construction of a unique community among minority immigrants.

Currently, the Korean population is over 1.7 million in the United States (including those with partial Korean heritage), and it is the fifth-largest population of all Asian ethnicities (United Nations Statistics Division, 2012). Additionally, as with many Asian minorities, California has become the area most populated area by Koreans, followed by New York and New Jersey.

The pattern of Korean immigration in the most recent wave, after the financial crisis of 2008, indicated that fundamental social characteristics of the immigrant have

altered significantly. In this study, I suggest a new classification for the group of Koreans who migrated after 2008: The New Korean Immigrant (NKI). The NKI shares several social and cultural characteristics with other Korean groups of immigrants and diverges in others. First, the NKI is more extensively educated than any other Korean immigrants in history (O'Connor & Batalova, 2017). Based on the 2013 Census data (United Nations Statistics Division, 2013), Korean immigrants are well educated and enter the United States primarily for work and education (as students). Currently, South Korea sends the third-largest number of international students to the United States (Andrej, 2020).

Second, compared with former Korean immigrant generations, the NKI experiences fewer conflicts in the process of cultural adaptation. According to the generation classification method of the Pew Research Center, the NKI comes from the end of Generation X and the beginning of the Millennial generation and manifests a completely different social structure from other Koreans in many ways. In particular, their adaptation flexibility is enhanced by diverse outside cultural contact (American and Japanese culture) and the democratized political landscape in Korean society (military dictatorship to universal suffrage-guaranteed democratization). Lee (2005) identified this generation as the Orange generation (The terminology originated from their unique pronunciation of the 'orange,' which is newly introduced fruit of the times), referring to a group that resided in Korea but studied overseas and received tremendous financial support from their wealthy parents. Moreover, this new generation ignited the Korean wave—another denotation of the popularity of the Korean pop culture, which has become a mainstream cultural phenomenon (Baek, 2005; Cho & Lee, 2007; Shin & Choi, 2007; Lim & Chae, 2014).

Third, the NKI has a new communication tool generated by the information revolution: the internet, that minimizes the hindrances of geographical distance during acculturation. Unlike previous generations of immigrants, people who belong to modern Korean society can live in the United States and consume the culture of the Korean mainland without any delays or glitches.

Finally, the NKI emphasizes mental subjectivity. Min (2009) indicated that recent research identified religious community as the primary social phenomenon shared within the Korean immigrant community, because of financial benefits and social security. Also, Min (2011) found that new Korean immigrants, especially those who came for work, have different social characteristics: they are more likely to be in the middle-class socioeconomically, with more liberal college graduates, and with a more comprehensive range of occupations.

In short, like many minority immigrants, Koreans have a tremendous influence on the political landscape as well as the cultural and social dynamic. At the same time, they share ambivalence about cultural adaptation as a synonym for loss of Korean cultural normality. As a result, many Koreans become more Americanized to achieve the goal of internationalization (Palmer & Cho, 2011). However, the NKI is a new type of immigrant who is more likely to have advanced education, cultural awareness, and cognitive independence of the target culture (American culture). The diversity of communication channels brought about by the historic transformation of the information revolution has allowed and encouraged group solidarity. Furthermore, since they are familiar with American ideology before becoming a part of American society, the NKI tends to have

fewer cultural conflicts in terms of acculturation. In other words, they are more likely to be globalized.

## Importance of the Korean Immigrant Father Study

In 2019, the Korean movie *Parasite* was awarded the Palm d'Or and (in 2020) six Oscars. In that movie, a father lives a parasitic life, beholden to his children and society even though he is unemployed. Interestingly, the father character shows manifold layers of the Korean father at different times. For instance, his tone sounds like an aristocrat of the feudal age, yet his appearance is completely unlike that of a modern, typical father in his late 50s.

Additionally, he hardly expresses his irritation, which is not what generally characterizes Korean fathers. However, when his family is confronted with an unprecedented scourge, he becomes the normative Korean father who assumes all responsibility. Hence, the kind of aptitude required for modern Korean fathers comes into question.

Family organization in modern Korea has been successfully democratized. Today's father has a significant relationship with his family. For instance, since the mid-2000s, the most popular television show in Korea has been *Dad! Where Are We Going?* The show is a reality program focusing on clumsy fathers and their kids, and in general the father has become popular content in television shows. As a social phenomenon, the fundamental involvement of the father in the postpartum period has greatly changed, a development that could yield positive repercussions for both the spouse and the child (do Nascimento, Marcelino, da Silva Vieira, & Lemos, 2019).

Lamb (2008) described how the Euro-American father and the Asian father have different perspectives of the father figure, focusing on the parents' playtime. Generally, Euro-American fathers tend to spend more time with their kids through physical interactions, while Asian fathers show more discipline-based interactions. However, Lamb stated that gender roles have become indistinguishable factors in parental involvement, intensifying political and economic liberalization for both cultures.

The fundamental rationale of the present study is that a unique community of practice among minority immigrants has formed as a result of the transformation of the community, the information revolution, and diverse communication media. At the same time, the diversification of minorities and the growing recognition of marginal cultural ideologies have intensified. It can, therefore, be concluded that this century is defined by multilocal global societies.

While composing this dissertation, I spent more time with my family due to the spread of COVID-19. I had a moment to reflect on myself and, while homeschooling my first son in elementary school lessons and playing dolls with my daughter who had just entered nursery school, I recognized the gap between the self and the social self of the minority father in the United States. I also recognized daily obstacles that originated from resocialization, such as children's dual-citizenship issues, tax reporting, educational institution selection, and the reformulation of the status of fathers to make meaningful decisions as members of the family community.

At the same time, the spread of racial conflict in the United States and rising hate crimes against Asians are among the most significant social costs of the current society. For more than 100 years, the United States has taken the lead in elevating an

understanding of minorities and their legal and social status, promoting the American value of freedom of diversity through the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 1920, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

However, White nationalists' recent terrorist patterns against minority immigrants deny the magnificence of America's history. Unlike historical White nationalist forces, new nationalism shows blatant solidarity with the White supremacist perspective. In other words, this view of acknowledging the superiority or classification of a particular race or community is a concept contrary to liberalism, which is supposed to be a core value of the American culture.

The most critical approach in this situation is to face facts as they are. As mentioned previously, changes in Asian countries are progressing rapidly in speed, direction, and degree, compared to those in any other countries (Gill & Kharas, 2007). It is not clear that the general U.S. population is aware of this progress. Fundamentally, it is urgent to have solutions in an effort to maintain humanity as a global community.

In this sense, this study casts doubt on preexisting stigmas of Korean immigrant fathers, redefines an alternative interpretation of this particular group in diaspora, and suggests reforms in how minority immigrants can settle into acculturation. The information revolution in the early 20th century brought about a significant change that again relaxed the boundaries between socioeconomic classes created by previous industrial societies. Moreover, in the process of acculturation, minority immigrants have created an important starting point for improving their adapted social status. Upon accepting such changes, the question arises as to whether we should distinguish the minority immigrant community. Many definitions of community exist. In general, from

the pedagogical perspective, the Western community concept has a dominant influence. However, the Eastern concept of community is different from the Western concept because it aims at a broader community.

The community, or the municipal group from which the Western perspective is projected, originated from the Latin word *communitas*, focusing on the concept of sharing. The prefix *com* stands for together, and *munis* stands for service. Therefore, the community represents the idea of sharing things in common, where some of those things are the normative values owned by society or in general. This may eventually be thought of as material knowledge, goods, or territory, and non-material concepts may include culture or language (Bonk, Wisher, & Nigrelli, 2004).

By contrast, the concept of community in Asian countries is strongly inclined toward the immaterial, such as beliefs and justice. For example, the concept of *sik gu* (family member), within a Korean consciousness system, tends to be equated with the concept of family, but the exact meaning of *sik gu* is "sharing time and material," with the alternative meaning of "mouth with a meal." On the other hand, *ga jok* (family) is the result of having joined a social belief system called family. In this process, the community of Asian countries is close to *ga jok* as a family, but in the West, *sik gu* may only classify types of community, rather than the family itself.

Of course, such a concept can be defined differently according to time, space, or framework. As noted previously, the most critical concept in the basic definition of a community is sharing. In this study, no distinction is made from the linguistic point of view of a community. In other words, dividing a class or section according to sharing

does not include the basic concept of community, and merely interpreting a community as an equal society can lead to serious errors.

In addition to this, globalization boosts cultural interconnection and amalgamation (in other words, fusion), creating a grand culture that encompasses all regional cultures in one consistent discourse. Some approaches situate all sides in equilibrium (Kleinman, 2013); others bring standardization in the name of economic efficiency or power hierarchy (Taylor, 2007). On this basis, foreign immigrants risk dissolving their identities when they become part of the other society, which is called acculturation or a monocultural environment (Berry, 2008).

The acculturation process, indeed, presupposes the power relation between mother and host culture and highlights communication as an underlying process and outcome of the acculturation process. Smither (1982) argued that the traditional viewpoint of acculturation presumes tolerance from the majority and a willingness to learn from the minority. Diverse individual factors and the contextual uniqueness of the acculturation may result in different outcomes. Additionally, acculturation may contain an inherited social hierarchy: dominant, subordinate, superior, inferior (Dohrenwend & Smith, 1962). Moreover, it may contain an inherited social context based on the influence of the acculturation process from the tightness of the mother culture and the social and psychological orientation of the individual, which yield distinct acculturation patterns (Berreman, 1964).

For instance, Spiro (1955) summarized the initial period of the study of acculturation in the United States, focusing on American ethnic minorities. Interestingly, he stated that acculturation and social mobility seemed to have a positive relationship.

That is, a group of minorities who move toward the upper social class tends to be more acculturated. However, what is the normative American? In other words, how and to what degree do individual Americans correspond with normative Americans? Is it even possible to quantify such a rationale in communication discourse?

Dr. Sato, whom I used to meet in line for the shuttle bus to the Columbia campus each morning, is a researcher at Columbia University's Earth Institute and has lived in the United States for over 30 years; nevertheless, she is proud to be called Japanese. Moreover, my 3-year-old daughter, who was born in New York City, does not speak a single word of English, but she is a U.S. citizen. By contrast, in the aftermath of the coronavirus, a White man, who wore a mask and shouted, "Go away!" to my spouse as she tried to save her family from hunger, then spoke to a friend in Russian. Reflecting on all of this, who can say is the most normative American?

## Instrumental Tool for Uncovering Liminality and Learning Style

What kind of symbol structure should be included in a guide map to understand the cultural adaptation of Korean immigrant fathers? The first point to present is the concept of liminality. Generally, liminality is intended to embody the metaphysical human consciousness system through structural interpretation (Turner, 1969). As this study presents, the nature of liminality shows that minority immigrants do not belong to a specific culture in the process of cultural adaptation.

Some use the concept of diaspora not by emphasizing the constituent elements of this liminality, but rather by emphasizing the characteristics of the collective sharing of memories by a group of communities; each study is a process of changing each person's

own experience and social environment. The difference is evident in that an atypical structure of consciousness has been created. On the other hand, Mezirow (1978) has suggested the answer lies in the transition of the frame of reference and the continuity aspect of repetitive actions and events that the flow of an individual's atypical consciousness structure meets with the passage of time.

Therefore, in this study, Korean immigrant fathers are shown to experience an atypical cultural transformation within their personal experience structure, which is a somewhat repetitive form of individual knowledge of time, space, and environment rather than a group experience. The approach emphasizes that the transformation acknowledges the diachronic form of the flow of change.

Hence, my research hypothesis was that new Korean fathers have experienced a distinctive symbolic transformation of their social status, internally and externally. Unlike other minority immigrants, new Korean fathers (a) are ready to change their status, (b) consider societal compulsion to be stronger than in previous generations, and (c) have a model and personal experience to reflect upon when transforming their preexisting frame of reference. Logically, environmental variables, such as advanced education, have extended fathers' interpersonal knowledge, while political developments have impacted cognitive transformation, through which they regressed or underwent side effects, such as retrospective adaptation or returning to authoritarian values.

In this regard, the flexibility of their cognition and socially constructed dilemmas has encouraged them to adapt. Thus, new Korean immigrant fathers comprise a practical, exemplary group that demonstrates how transformative learning can affect the informal educational environment of the family. This research offers a new perspective on

minority immigration in the United States, specifically focusing on Korean fathers who have relatively close cognitive ties with American culture, as they live within and are surrounded by an invisible conflict of social values.

## Logistical Inquiry Procedure of the Study

The research design uses a hybrid research method to increase the reliability of the research and ensure its overall validity. First, as a method for quantitative research, an online survey of all Korean immigrants was conducted to explore the overall issues related to the families that are shared by Korean immigrants. However, considering the difficulty in identifying the outline of the target audience, cluster sampling was used in the sampling method.

In addition, an online survey was distributed to Korean immigrant families. This survey aimed to define the social and cultural characteristics of modern Korean immigrants as well as the practical issues with which they are confronted during the acculturation process. The survey contained five sections: demographic information, power hierarchy, childcare, family memories, and cultural identity, as well as a request for further participation. This survey mainly inquired about Korean immigrants' experiences as minority immigrants in the United States.

As an extension of the online survey, an interview focused on (a) examining how each participant's acculturation stage reflected the individual's learning style; (b) collecting anecdotes that apply to the adult learning perspective and the family as an educator; (c) analyzing how a diverse immigration path juxtaposes with current issues

faced by the immigrant family; and (d) identifying how educational interventions can promote sustainable acculturation.

In order to deliver these objectives, the interviews were conducted either individually or as a group, and various methods were used (participatory observation, an interactive conversation of the theme, and interaction at a family social gathering), depending on the participants' preferences. The content of the interview was conducted as a discussion of a main topic, with interpretation of the online survey presented as a specific topic.

Moreover, thanks to the naturally horizontal interview structure, the participant observation conducted by the researcher took on an organic flow. Interview participants were aware that their behavior was being observed in a specific situation, and they were able to exchange opinions about naturally observed content. In other words, participant checking or member check (Koelsch, 2013) could be maintained, eventually providing an opportunity to confirm its reasonably positive effect on the validity of the raw data. Simultaneously, the researcher offers 10 minutes of briefing and reflection and discussion sessions to enhance the data quality.

Finally, in terms of method, the hybrid method contributed to the feasibility of the research. During the process of interviewing Korean fathers, the essential part of this study—the intentional interview structure—was modified (to a horizontal interview structure) to strengthen rapport and make a meaningful member check possible.

In summary, this study paid attention to changes in the immigration process of Korean fathers, who have long been neglected in immigrant studies. The ultimate goal of the study was to support a change in the negative perception of Asian men, a robust

social prejudice in American society. As a structural framework for interpreting change, I applied Turner's (1969) liminality as a social-cognitive structure for the Korean fathers. At the same time, through Mezirow's (1997) transformative learning theory and Leichter's (1974) perspective on the family as an educator, I highlighted the history of immigration as a more diverse spectrum of experience, through a structural analysis of anecdotes, personal reflections, and the learning process of a new cultural discourse.

# Chapter II

# LITERATURE REVIEW

The priority of the literature review is to understand the overall character of Korean immigrant research and how research on Korean fathers has been conducted. For an inclusive comparison, some of the father studies conducted in Western discourses are referenced. This review was an opportunity to increase understanding of how Korean immigrant fathers conduct the resocialization process and generally how they perceive the target culture (in this case, the U.S.) during this process.

In this study, Turner's (1969) liminality and various learning styles served as the framework for observing and analyzing the daily lives of Korean fathers. Liminality presents as a cognitive-spatiotemporal understanding of immigrants, while learning style is a comprehensive model used to interpret behavior as learners resocialize or adapt to the target culture as immigrants. Among them, Mezirow's (1997) transformative learning theory, which emphasizes critical reflection, is the most crucial of 21st-century soft skills.

## Diachronic Father Studies

In social science, four distinct perspectives focus on the father's presence in the family; these are systemic ecological (capitalist), social constructionist, generative, and developmental perspectives. All four entail antagonistic yet complementary relationships in order to recognize the father figure. Except for generativity, the other three perspectives emerged from positivism (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000).

In the systemic ecological perspective, the father represents the primary value of an individual unit within a specific spatiotemporal perception. Hence, the father gained authority, even as the Medieval age was overcoming civil revolutions, such as the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. At some point, the father epistemology took over the priest's social role of historian and, in part, that of the presiding judge of the family (Lamb, 2010). The Industrial Revolution was classified by economic prosperity, and peasant fathers and fathers without capital were segregated by their general competencies. As such, a father who can provide enough money and time for his family can still retain traditional authority, but to the contrary, he becomes a superficial paternal authority. Until the arrival of the information revolution and globalization, such divisions of labor and the importance of financial ability were intensified.

Consequently, divisions of labor created perpetuated, redundant images of the father, supported by societal inequality and the diachronic consistency of the hierarchy (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1985). Recent global phenomena, such as the information revolution, political upheaval (democratization), and the interregional population movement have mitigated such discrimination.

The social constructionist perspective of the father highlights his specific functions as a father, using parental intervention methods (Marsiglio et al., 2000). For instance, social capital, which is a byproduct of industrialization, is one aspect of the determination of fatherhood. In their findings, Marsiglio et al. asserted that social capital analysis reinforces the overall involvement of the father, reflecting a family system. Additionally, Doherty, Kouneski, and Erickson (1998) suggested that "responsible

fathering" is more about being value-sensitive, which means social capital is more primary than material capital.

The social constructionist perspective was based on binary thinking, which makes any argument incomplete. Hence, contemporary theorists have acknowledged that the "co-constructed nature of men's identities" is a suitable description of fatherhood (Marsiglio et al., 2000, p. 1177). The developmental, or interactionist, perspective, for instance, focuses more on the life discourse of fatherhood. These new approaches see that the symbol of the father is constantly shifting according to changes in the individual's experience and meaning rather than maintaining the traditional form.

Therefore, the developmental perspective illuminates particular aspects of the father. Developmentalists tend to have in-depth connections with constructionists. Unlike the latter, however, developmentalists employ environmental variables, leading some schools of developmentalist thought to distinguish themselves as interactionists. Hence, the context of both the family structure and social relationships between a parent and a child can affect social ecologies (Parke, Buriel, & Damon, 1998). Furthermore, cultural and subcultural variations may result in an interconnected influence between a parent and a child.

Conversely, the last of these four perspectives, generativity, emerges from a paradigm of deficit and role-inadequacy (Grebe, Sarafin, Strenth, & Zilioli, 2019). Historical observations and functional classifications of the father have identified diverse outliers—for instance, a massacre of civilians during a war makes it challenging to rationalize either the historical or the functional perspective.

Additionally, nepotism, which can be analyzed as noblesse oblige in the West, can be dismissed as harmful group selfishness, called *Chaebol* or Zaibatsu in Eastern cultures. Kim (2006) interpreted the *Chaebol* concept as exclusive, in that the inheritance of wealth through a specific family is centered on the eldest son or the male. Despite the discomfort of this type of relationship, the outcome of nepotism brings a wide range of consequences that may be considered the logical ground of the developmentalist perspective.

As mentioned earlier, there is a profound paradox in the diverse interpretive perspectives of the father; the more one looks into the social phenomena, the less is left to see (Leichter, 1978). Thus, diverse disciplines and methods emphasize the range of the definition. Based on the varying perspectives of the father figure, the father is part of a historical, social group that is mandatory for the family in a biological sense. However, various extensions of the canonical family unit have created additional definitions of the father in new relational, situational, and functional roles. Therefore, accurate analysis of the modern father must be contextualized in the various efforts to understand the father within the complexities of time, place, and culture while applying both synchronic and diachronic perspectives.

In conclusion, the perception of the father has undergone significant changes throughout cultural discourses. This can be explained as part of a sophistication phenomenon in which the composition of the cultural layer of society diversifies along with changes in the power system. Nevertheless, these changes confirm that even in an internationalized society, the father's social position is one of outward motion, away from

the core. Fathers may not be still represent a robust centrifugal force, compared to other social groups such as women, the elderly, and children.

## Korean Father Study

Like the early study of fathers, the Korean father study, in general, was conducted as a secondary or corresponding objective of larger research projects. As a side effect of the rapid expansion of the market economy in the second half of the 20th century, the division of the labor force intensified, and women's social participation naturally increased. Korean society also experienced a severe change in the position of the male head as a result of these changes, and the 1997-98 financial crisis, known as the Asian financial crisis, is recognized as a vital incident that altered Korean male social status. Since then, the overall approach to father recognition more closely resembles the structure of globalization discourse.

Among the immigrant generations, men from their 30s through their 50s who formed a group of nuclear families showed unusual social and cultural commonalities. In brief, they had a relatively high level of education and a more homogeneous culture, as their understanding of American or Western culture had been acquired since childhood. They also had a high level of economic power in general within American society and showed a tendency for social networks based on individualistic or communicative behaviors.

Before we turn our attention specifically to the father in Korean immigrant history, it is essential to review the history of Korean immigrants in the United States.

The history of Korean immigration to America is exceptionally colorful, much like the hanbok (the traditional Korean dress).

In the early 1900s, contract laborers— predominantly men, but a few women and children—decorated the first page of the Korean immigration history book by settling in Hawaii and West Coast cities such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, which were geographically close to Korea and with a higher demand for low-wage labor. At the same time came elite Koreans who were educated during the Japanese colonial period; these people wished to be more enlightened and emancipated and to secure religious freedom in a new country (Kim & Grant, 1997).

The post-Korean war immigration in the 1950s, classified as a second Korean immigration wave to the United States, also followed a dichotomous path. First, some groups chose immigration in search of economic abundance and security, represented by war orphans or unskilled laborers. Some elites opted for immigration as a means of self-actualization and status maintenance by governments or individuals. This tendency did not change until the third wave, with the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Min, 2001). Known as the Hart-Celler Act, this law eased restrictions on immigration according to national origin that had characterized U.S. immigration policy from the 1920s, meant "to preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity" (U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian, Retrieved March 2020). Although this 1965 Act maintained per-country and total immigration limits, it increased the total volume as well as the diversity of social backgrounds among Korean immigrants in the United States.

Due to sustained growth, the Korean population is now the fifth-largest Asian immigrant population in the United States (United Nations Statistics Division, 2012,

p.17). The present study focuses on a fourth wave of immigration that began in 2008, following the worldwide financial crisis of 2007-08. During this period, economic factors and immigrant status became crucial for Koreans who tried to immigrate, and the number of international students, who comprised 3% of the total Korean population in the United States, decreased significantly. At the time of the 2010 U.S. Census, the Korean population in America was 1.7 million. Among this population, 52,250 were Korean international students (Institute of International Education Annual Data, 2019). For degree holders, the H-1B visa, a legal path to permanent residency, became harder to obtain, and so most Korean students in the United States returned to Korea.

At the same time, more economically stable international students settled in the United States because they had more opportunities to complete their degrees and go through legal immigration (Hazen & Alberts, 2006). Moreover, they were becoming socially recognized in America as they built their image as a model minority (characterized by low crime rates, high levels of education, and professionalism).

The model minority discourse is characterized by a binary trajectory of understanding: The initial stage implied in the terminology emphasizes the successful immigration path of Asian immigrants as a propagatable example (Peterson, 1966; Ford & Lee, 1996; Wu, 2015). Conversely, the recent discourse on model minority tends to highlight the negative connotation of the terminology's definition (Museus & Kiang, 2009; Chou & Feagin, 2015). In this study, I endeavored to use a bias-free term for successful minority immigrants. At the same time, if a participant uses a given term, I tried to leave such an instance as it is. Because this study's primary purpose is to redefine

the “minority” of minority groups, such value-bias usage of the terminology might impede a lively understanding of minority immigrant fathers.

The majority of studies on Korean immigrants in the United States have focused predominantly on three categories: cultural diversification (Lee, Choe, Kim, & Ngo, 2000; Min, 1984, 1992, 2001; Moon, 2003); economic and religious settlement patterns (Foner, 1997; Kim, Kim, & Kelly, 2006; Min & Kim, 2010; Sanders & Nee, 1996; Yoon, 1991; Zhou & Kim, 2006); and social minorities, such as women, youth, and the elderly (Guan, Greenfield, & Orellana, 2014; Han, 2014; Kim & Grant, 1997; Kwon, 2014; Lee, Kaplan, & Perez-Stable, 2014; Lim, 1997; Shin & Shin, 1999; Yeh, 2003; Yeh et al., 2005).

Korean American immigrant history reflects the dichotomous social composition of the immigrants, with each group demonstrating different adaptation mechanisms with respect to the target culture. In general, the lower socioeconomic classes focused more on dominant cultural adaptation, while the upper socioeconomic classes attempted to attain cultural competency. However, current mainstream perception rigidly stereotypes Asians. The contemporary immigrant father is regarded as a key factor for acculturation, whether motivator or deterrent, and as a watchdog for traditional ideology in the name of cultural uniqueness. Additionally, researchers are continuing to look at new and previously unstudied aspects of this immigrant group, such as Wild Geese fathers (Lee & Koo, 2006), which describes a new family structure created for economic support. In this configuration, the father stays in Korea, while the child and mother live in another country for education.

Meanwhile, research on the father figure in the family has presented a stiff, stereotypical conceptualization that represents an old and authoritarian character who creates social conflicts (Das & Kemp, 1997; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Shen et al., 2005). Interestingly, current Asian gender studies view the lives of father figures through a feminist lens by interpreting the father's role as an assistant rather than a dominant leader. Throughout the literature, the overall concept of a father is relatively biased. For instance, researchers have suggested that women were victims of immigration, and that the old society's oppressive conditions revealed a distorting conceptualization of gender roles and an obstruction of acculturation (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999; Min, 2001; Noh et al., 1992).

Furthermore, religion and economic prosperity, which are usually depicted as positive outcomes of immigration, enhanced rigid gender roles in the immigrant Asian society (Das & Kemp, 1997; Shen et al., 2005). Although some research (such as Dion & Dion, 2004) has indicated that cultural heritage may enhance identity stability and gender prosperity among the immigrant population, this remains a minority view in immigrant gender studies.

Therefore, the most vivid distinctions, such as the social status of women, adolescent educational customs, and the social conflicts of the elderly, have become typical research subjects, and consequently, the male figure has been overlooked in academic discourse. In short, the immigrant father in immigrant studies has been marginalized as a result of rigid stigmatization, stereotyped image, and the overgeneralization of the group by the mainstream population.

Palmer and Cho (2011) indicated that although modern Asian societies have adopted Americanization as internationalization and have altered their social perceptions and practices regarding the West, intense stigma persists of being perceived as imitators of Western value. Notably, the Asian father is denounced as a conflict generator (Kim & Rohner, 2003) who preserves time-worn wisdom and wields authoritarian power (Berndt, Cheung, Lau, Hau, & Lew, 1993), despite being in a transformational social setting.

The early period of immigrant studies considered the immigrant father as a retrogressive factor for acculturation and as an influential factor in social conflicts among immigrant families (Chuang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2009; Jain & Belsky, 1997; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Kim, 2002; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Min, 2001; Shimon et al., 2003). Social signifiers of the father include language structure (Tabellini, 2008), surveillance (Jacob & Tyrell, 2010), passive voice (Pyke, 2000), language proficiency (Gorodzeisky, Sarid, Mirsky, & Slonim-Nevo, 2014), and democracy (Lange, 2004). Although such interpretational signifiers rarely apply to specific cases, they are useful tools for thinking about the general academic perspective of the immigrant father. These signifiers can be classified into cultural competence and cultural connotation (Connerton, 1989).

According to Connerton (1989), cultural competence refers to "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" and "having the capacity to function effectively" (p. 12). Cultural connotation refers to "the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group" (p. 13). For instance, language use and passive voice

could be cultural connotations, while the other signifiers could be classified as cultural competences. Since acculturation or assimilation yields a social shift in the individual and the group, the immigrant father is a crucial subject for demonstrating not only the degree of acculturation but also the accomplishment of the change (Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, Capps, & Zaff, 2006; Jain & Belsky, 1997; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Kwon, 2014).

Notably, Asian immigrant fathers were marginalized from mainstream research. Academicians not only held the father fully responsible if family members were not recognized as successful immigrants, but they also interpreted the father's endeavor to maintain a cultural identity as a stigma against altering social position (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999; Min, 2001; Noh et al., 1992). However, recent analysis of the Asian father has evolved significantly, with an assertion that the uniqueness of Asian fathers contributed to the protection of cultural diversity. In addition, a father's presence in the family increases the overall benefit for both the mother-father and father-child relationship (Chuang & LeMonda, 2009). Moreover, people in a particular socioeconomic status may indeed view the father as a stern parent and still have strong inclinations toward fixed gender roles (Kim, 2008).

On the other hand, particular social conditions, such as social restructuring, socioeconomic status and occupation, and residential characteristics, would impact the father function of the family (Qin & Chang, 2013). For instance, the dual-income middle-class family has a strong inclination toward a horizontal family structure, with greater gender equity, while the single-income middle-class family tends to accept patriarchal values. Meanwhile, if the social structure is changed through geographic migration or

immigration, the gender power imbalance is relatively reduced, and the female spouse gains more autonomy in the family.

## Liminality as a Cognitive Spatiotemporal Tool of the Korean Father

In the field of immigrant studies, marginality is the critical element that sociologists have tried to define. For example, the "middleman minority theory" coined by Hubert Blalock (1967) described a cognitive confirmation of the border or margin between a majority and a segregated minority. On the other hand, Victor Turner (1969) introduced an intermittent stage called "liminality."

Liminality, which is the movement from one space and time to the next, or the course of the movement between one fixed boundary and another, occurs in the process of internalizing human time, including life rites and social commemorations. The concept is often applied to a humanistic perspective of religious anthropology, to help explain the atypicality of secular life. Although most of Turner's studies have been concerned with how to connect the time and space that constitutes the gap between religion and real life, the expression "all forms of the movement in social life" (Turner, 1969, p. 358) provides a glimpse into the extensibility of the theory. Modern individuals experience voluntary liminality in different ways, such as a city commuter using his or her music player to transform a public transit space into a sanctuary for the individual (Bull, 2005). Strolling through a city park, meditation and workouts are comparable concepts of instant but voluntary liminality.

Turner believed that this transition from XYZ to liminality could be completed in three steps: Separation, Margin, and Aggregation. Like many other anthropological

observers, Turner also advocated for structural coordination, which enforces the rationality and developmental learning perspectives. For instance, consider the three steps (Separation, Margin, Aggregation) adjoined with the East Asian consciousness structure of transmigration. In this case, the world connecting here and there may seem a form of binary thinking. However, between here and there is a momentary space or margin. Such spatial differences connect one another, and the circulative movement is a developmental structural transition. Turner's first stage, Separation, indicates a preconceived structure to an idea that parallels the presumption in Mezirow's (1997) transformative learning perspective of a dilemma (or previous experience).

To understand his theory more vividly, Turner suggested a diametrical point in the concept of liminality. *Communitas*, which comes from Latin words for community, is a static society that has a fundamental order, hierarchy, and structure within a society. The concept refers to a utopian world where all concepts are ambiguous and shared by members. *Communitas* itself is an amplification of the universal concept of community that is shared in general, emphasizing the ambiguity of the Chaos pattern and, at the same time, clearly distinguishing the boundary between here and there.

Leichter (1978) also used Turner's concept of liminality as an important spatiotemporal momentariness through which the most productive education can emerge. In particular, she argued that the malleability of structural boundaries creates a "stage of reflection" (p. 79). If so, how does this liminality exist only within one culture? Turner (1991) also acknowledged the possibility of experiencing borderlines through contact with other cultures. Visiting museums or participating in other religious rituals, which are spaces to experience entirely different types of borders, are moments that reinforce the

liminal experience. It is thus possible to enter into a completely different *communitas* without physically exiting one's primary borders.

Hence, the liminal experience reforms the current stage of individual cognition and further acknowledges the edge of the recognition transforming an individual frame of reference. In the same manner, immigration requires transformation an individual's prerequisite mode of life and also increases the unprescribed social order, introducing temporal forms of status designated from the majority into normality. Of course, such a transition is not a linear process; instead, many forms of retrogression happen in the name of identity protection.

Furthermore, older patterns of immigration seem to have a steady inclination toward individual prosperity. Drummond (1999) indicated that religious endeavors, including the maintenance and creation of community and the meaning-making process of religious rituals, resulted in a sense of belonging that created transmission and transformation of memory. However, modern immigration has another advantage for the host country: being in a new frame. Beech (2011) observed the process of social self-establishment through liminality experiences, as embodied in Turner's (1987) "betwixt and between" conversations about a worker's liminal structure that could arise during work. He outlined the three stages of composition (Experimentation, Reflection, and Recognition) in the process of dialogue and recognized that there is a moment in which the individual becomes alert at each stage.

Turner (1979) himself argued that the functions of public liminality should not be overlooked. Liminality is experienced by everyone; in such events as festivals and elections, the purpose in many cases is evident along with the structural framework. In

the end, liminality within Beech's (2011) community can be said to be artificial liminality based on the structural composition. At the same time, this public demarcation of borders and liminal space is an essential model of acculturation experienced by members who eventually migrate from one culture to another.

Interestingly, many researchers have tried to define liminality in an organizational setting. Tempest and Starkey (2004) considered liminality as a learning concept, wherein the contractualization of work can involve new ways of organizing and experiencing work. For example, temporary project teams can enhance the opportunity to increase the learning capacity of the participant, reducing structural stigma and logistical formality. Henfridsson and Yoo (2013) tried to define how entrepreneurs accommodate the liminal stage when they transform their perspective. After conducting in-depth interviews, they found three mechanisms: reflective dissension, imaginative projection, and eliminatory exploration. Interestingly, all three mechanisms have similar characteristics to the cultural adaptation pattern of minority immigrants in terms of their application to important self-reflection.

Hence, liminality seems to require a group archetype that advocates changing from one position to another. Most immigrants are forced to accept the target cultural and social norms in a process that effectively omits Turner's liminal stage. They have their social archetypes that are usually called frames of reference. When immigrants move to a new cultural frame of reference, they are forced to modify the perceptional structure, increasing the objectivity of both the old and the new consciousness structures.

Additionally, liminality is a cognitive conception that might make it impossible to classify logical time and space. Howard-Grenville, Golden-Biddle, Irwin, and Mao

(2011) interpreted the organizational cultural transformation that applies the liminality concept. The emphasis is on cultural transition, which might have as significant an impact on normative life incidents as liminal transitions. In these transitions, the metaphysical interpretation of ordinary life is critical. What is most interesting about their conceptualization of liminality is that there is a culturally transformative possibility to interpret the liminal stage. As suggested earlier, the liminal stage is not just a physical or metaphysical transformation from one place to another. It is more about the cognitive-developmental processes that require an acknowledgment of an alternative.

Szakolczai (2009) predicted that in addition to the semantic strength of liminality, it is possible to restructure modernity with structural ambiguity. Thought-centered thinking, starting with Aristotle and Kant, adds to the atypical concept of liminality, reconstructing the most fundamental framework of preexisting global ideology. Szakolczai (2009) saw that the semantic ambiguity of liminality does not serve as a view that revolutionizes existing structures, but it is instead the opportunity for change brought about by the construction of a completely new consciousness based on flexibility (p. 166).

Thus, liminality is more about cognitive malleability or the adaptability of a new perspective. Turner's (1987) point of view did not specify a hierarchical order of the "betwixt and between," although the actual adaptation of the theory admits an inevitable hierarchy, particularly in the acculturation process. However, new social environments (such as the information revolution) have diminished geographical limitations and ideological equality, thus lessening such a hierarchical order.

Rampton (1999) used liminality to describe modern youth's cultural characteristics. From small talks with a sample of youth, he found that a consecutive reformation of the micro-organization, frequent attention shift, and interactional discourse ignited several liminal periods, which had a significant influence on youth identity building. In particular, Rampton suggested "new ethnicities," which are not associated with biological ethnic classification but are instead more in keeping with cultural similarity and sociolinguistic binding.

In short, Turner's liminality facilitates an alternative perception of humanism in modern philosophy. Mainly, the structural orientation of the world in the recursive method introduces a new cognitive understanding of human activity. To the same extent, general minority immigrant settlement patterns reflect a comparable configuration that transforms cognitive reference.

## Learning Style in Korean Immigration Patterns

Among the various definitions of education, the primary concerns of modern education can be summarized as systematic development and cognitive creativity. The thinking skills of the 21st century constitute a new learning approach in such circumstances. Ananiadou and Claro (2009) stated that 21st-century skill competence is the ability to perform tasks and solve problems while applying learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (p. 8). This competence has also been referred to as "high thinking skills" (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012), "creative problem solving" (Larson & Miller, 2011), or "collective and cognitive attention of the human behavior" (Silva, 2009).

Notably, none of these approaches mention memorization, correction, practice, and assessment, which are the essential elements in a normative learning perspective.

In terms of systematic classification, new education can be divided into either schooling (which is a representative model for standardization and normality) or non-institutional education (which refers to all educational interventions outside of the educational system). The focus of schooling is on the provision of a certain level of knowledge transmission (centered on national institutions) to future generations, who will be cultivated as citizens through a formalized and standardized education. For this reason, institutional education has emphasized equality as its priority, while status flexibility is a positive subsidiary of the intervention. In other words, education acts as a significant value system for hereditary power as well as an opportunity to secure growth for the socially underprivileged.

On the other hand, the emergence of non-Western civilization, particularly Asia, has generated a significant convergence of various value systems. In this case, the American system, which became the dominant structure, has recognized an atypical educational intervention that is far removed from schooling (Leichter, 1984). In particular, as lifelong education emerged from the existing framework that described education as a developmental stage, adult education began to act as a vital antithesis to the existing discourse of education (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Therefore, lifelong education has resulted in a broad spectrum of learning. Specifically, the concept of the family as an educator, proposed by Leichter (1984), has produced a significant opportunity to rediscover the most routine education that humanity has ever preserved.

John Dewey's (1907) learning society and cognitive learning philosophy emphasized learning as an experience that diverged to andragogical learning perspective (Knowles, 1980; Kohlberg, 1976) and Rogers's (1954) or Mezirow's (1997) learner-centered learning system, which divides the methodology and structure of lifelong education, as shown by activism, into pedagogy. Consequently, the non-formal or atypical pattern of the andragogical educational intervention advocates organic learning through memory and family-centered intervention.

Moreover, educational evaluation based on the experiences and stories that Leichter (1984) suggested provided in-depth perspectives of the multi-dimensional evaluation method used to assess the presence of cognitive knowledge. She further analyzed manners, attitudes, values, background education opportunities, and embarrassments. The process of educative intervention, in contrast with the setting (time), frame (space), and context (human activity) in the educational style of the instructor, ultimately determines the individual's educational style (Leichter, 1978, p. 69). This concept connects with the Kong Fuzi in the Confucian educational intervention, and it reinterprets the four human natures as represented by fear, righteousness, humility, and right/wrong (Havens, 2013).

Interest in education outside of schooling has been an essential catalyst in changing the concept of education in the 21st century. The current school system not only suggests various ways to realize holistic education, but also emphasizes the concept of education as going beyond the transfer of existing uniform knowledge through the new educational goals of 21st-century soft skills. In other words, the standardization of education represented by the prerequisite frame of reference, which was formed with the

past and presented a partial discourse of schooling, requires universal standardized knowledge. However, the future, which increases what Verlander (2018) called CUVA (Complex, Uncertain, Volatile, Ambiguous) and even space (Verlander, 2018), emphasizes non-formulated competencies such as critical thinking, leadership, and flexible thinking.

In this process, social networks are recognized as a variable that can evaluate or accommodate various inadequacies in the school curriculum. Additionally, various methods have been developed for evaluating individual social networks in diverse academic discourses. Particularly, Leichter's (1974) educational concept expands into non-traditional educational institutions such as media, family, and community, which are recognized as powerful educational media in the modern era. Nevertheless, current knowledge about education still does not consider them and hesitates to see them as significant factors in educational institutions.

In the end, the current social system, which has its roots in nationalism and the Industrial Revolution, acknowledges the new concept of education for adults who need resocialization when moving from one social unit to another. For example, political and cultural institutions such as museums, libraries, art galleries, and town governments have gained new roles as secondary educational institutions that fill in the areas that traditional schooling cannot handle.

Along with the andragogical conceptualization of adult learning, transformative learning has emerged in adult educational discourse, right after Mezirow's (1978) declaration of the term, focusing on women's study. His early conceptualization of transformative learning was influenced by various sources, including Habermas's (as

cited in Kitchenham, 2008) domains of learning and the conscientization of Freire (as cited in Kitchenham, 2008).

Mezirow (1997) asserted that transformative learning is a change in a frame of reference, in which adult learners use their experiences to define their worldview and its alteration with significant, cultural social changes. Particularly when the learning happens, two different learnings have been observed: instrumental and communicative. Mezirow (2003) stated that instrumental learning is "hypothetical-deductive," while communicative learning is "analogic-abductive inference" (p. 59). In other words, most of school-based education tries to crystallize the instrumental learning style as the primary medium of education. Meanwhile, informal learning, including transformative learning and family as educator, intends to define reasoning based on circumstantial knowledge. As such, Mezirow's transformative learning uses communicative learning to redefine a fixed frame of reference-encompassing habit of mind and meaning perspective.

In this case, the frame of reference includes cognitive, conative, and emotional responses, which are mostly shaped by cultural assimilation from family (Mezirow started as a caregiver). Therefore, the degree of stiffening of the mindset can vary.

Similarly, Bandura and Walters (1977) indicated that learning could be categorized as learning from direct experience or learning through modeling, while social learning theory focuses on the social context of a given situation in modeling. Thus, each learning occurs like a modeling process, while each attempt should be filtered through symbolic coding, cognitive, and organizational rehearsal before reinforcement. Although they use different terminologies, their conception of the adult learning process is very similar to Mezirow's transformative learning.

Mezirow (1990) averred that transformations in frames of reference take place through critical reflection and may result from an accretion of transformations in points of view. Regarding critical reflection, he believed that reflection on-premises is associated with critical reviews that encompass epistemic, sociocultural, and psychological aspects. Mezirow (2003) further stated that transformative learning requires reasoning that encompasses instrumental and communicative learning. To achieve metacognitive reasoning, critical-dialectical discourse should be considered in individual meaning-making from experiences.

Taylor (2007) focused on the practical understanding of Mezirow's transformative learning. He concluded that the contextualized cognition of the learning process, verifying the trigger of the learning process, the role of relationship and informational knowledge with minimized critical reflection, and definitional factors of the transformative learning, should be considered.

A specific condition must precede this series of educational interventions. First, all learners must have the ability to think in addition to voluntary communication skills. At this point, traditional schooling makes a difference. In humanistic learning theory, the main participants in learning are the learners themselves, and their will is the most important factor. Second, learners must be able to tolerate a challenge to the framework they have built at any time through a self-critical reflection process and creative thinking; this is also called flexibility of thought—i.e., thought which must recognize the complete denial of a pre-coded frame of reference. Finally, transformative learning is possible when the circulation of learning and thinking perpetuates its process.

Recently, transformative learning theory has become the mainstream discourse for adult learning, with a variety of models including psychoanalytic perspectives (Dirkx, 2006; Jackson, 2009; Taylor, 1997); self-directed (Brockett, 1985; Merriam, 2004; Pilling-Cormick, 1997) or self-critical reflection (Kilgore, 2001; Lange, 2004; Taylor, 1994); context-based learning (Hansman, 2001); group activity (Imel, 1999); and multidimensional learning phenomena (Allen, 2007; Kennedy, 2002; Merriam, 2008; Trotter, 2006; Yang, 2003).

This tendency toward transformational theory has intensified the stratification of education even as existing educational discourses recognize that schooling is not able to satisfy the new value of education, including humanistic education and andragogical ideology. Eventually, Dewey's (1902) experience of school as an educative intervention influenced Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory and formed a new educational discourse: lifelong learning.

Since the early 20th century, the social participation of women has also been highlighted as an alternative solution to the absence of a large male labor force caused by warfare, and this has been accompanied by various sociological changes (Cranton, 2016). First of all, feminism and the enhancement of women's rights appeared in the development of human rights in specific dimensions, such as wage reform, gender equality, voting rights, and respect for alternative sexual orientations. Ironically, the most important reason for such changes was the inevitability of filling up the labor force that capitalist society was lacking.

Here, Mezirow's transformative learning provides the basis for the logic structure of such an era when massive resocialization of the female labor forces was needed

(Cranton, 2016). Transformative learning is an educational opportunity related to adult learners who have already achieved a certain level of learning ability and completed the educational intervention, and they thus have full autonomy in their frame of reference. Mezirow specifically studied women—in this case, individuals previously given particular social roles—who needed to transform in order to fit into new roles. The dilemma that raises future problems is the main foundation of educational value. In addition, the completion of transformative learning that began with an empirical dilemma is the self-directed, critical learning process about the dilemma itself (Mezirow, 1997).

How can such an educational intervention be applied to minority immigrants? Until now, the majority of immigrant education has unilaterally conveyed knowledge. For instance, the previous generation is the knowledge base, and a newcomer tries to follow the existing path without any critical reflection. Such an information distribution channel is used by the non-immigrant group as well. Old habits or information are delivered through community centers, churches, or existing educational institutions in each location and distributed as solid and irrefutable information. Finally, such a series of acts become a rule of thumb for a community experience. Learning through experience within the community exists in one form, which, like the monotheism of faith, proved its existence in a way that thoroughly rejected any differences from an existing structure.

However, in the structure of the revolution of the information distribution network, adaption of the internet and the multi-polarization or decentralization of authority (such as the Blockchain network) initiates a non-polarization of information. Centralization or polarization becomes meaningless in the information structure that constitutes a multicore.

The lives of minority immigrants in the process of developing personal assimilation serve as the litmus test of acceptable normality as they indirectly undergo this changed framework of a nonpolar society. They belong to a specific institution or structure that attempts progressive change in search of a new structure. In such attempts, failures and altered structures have formed and reformed structures, thereby increasing the flexibility of the minority immigrant mind and system.

In particular, recent Korean immigrants can be classified as global citizens on the basis of their improved socioeconomic status, indicating self-awareness of flexibility and critical reflection of the self in terms of their dualized immigrant genealogy.

Moreover, contrary to the current view of challengers (emerging migrants who challenge existing forces), new immigrants are already well-prepared learners who are self-aware, critical thinkers, and creative minds at the same time. The main difference is that their lifestyle shows a marked difference from the previous immigrant generation. In other words, systematic analysis of education through new immigration patterns recognizes that immigrants who were newly introduced from the educational side are the generations who can think critically, with their fundamentals based on both direct and indirect experience.

In conclusion, this literature review has developed several solid foundations. First, the hegemony of the Western civilization society, which started with the Industrial Revolution, has influenced the structure of other civilizations. Moreover, this dominance motivated different cultures to adopt elements of Western society, and the formalized perception of the father in Asian cultures showed rapid deviations. Korean father studies also shared these tendencies and perceptions, but there was a significant difference in

structural perception in the immigrant culture, where culture transplant recipients were emphasized. As a result, the significant gap between the daily life of immigrant fathers and the trivial perception of social discourse was highlighted as changes were traced in the study of Korean fathers.

Second, a framework of perspectives was presented for future studies of Korean immigrant fathers. Turner's (1969) notion of liminality will provide important insights into the structural epistemology of Korean immigrant fathers, as highlighted in this study, and may eventually play an essential role in analyzing the structural specificity of minority immigrants who have no specific cultural or regional peculiarities and are left as marginalized subordinated cultural groups. I examined various learning styles of adult learners to use as a practical model and to provide a meaningful interpretative tool for the cultural learning method of Korean fathers. Among these possible tools, Mezirow's (1978) transformative learning seems to be the most suitable cognitive tool for the actual situation of Korean immigrant fathers, who are forced to adopt new cultures through change and adaptation. This methodology represents the rediscovery of education through variables that have been relatively devalued, existing educational concepts such as regression, atypicality, and communication, that are unlike educational methods based on a hierarchical and structural development theory represented by institutional or instrumental learning.

# Chapter III

# METHOD

This research focused on Asian fathers who live in the United States, specifically Korean fathers. In it, I sought to address issues about the social perceptions of minority immigrants and to provide alternative interpretations of the acculturation of Korean fathers, who have been neglected in diverse social and educational discourses. In particular, I looked at recent Korean immigrants who entered the United States after 2008 and demonstrated the distinct demographic and socioeconomic hallmarks (e.g., better educational opportunities, economic prosperity, and cultural openness) of immigration to the United States.

Although varied viewpoints on diversity, ingenuity, and authenticity have been adopted in the last decade of academic discourse, the exploration of structured consciousness has been distorted by neo-conservatism and the social phenomenon of reverse discrimination and has emphasized the cognitive polarization of pluralism. As a result, the current reality is defined by situated knowledge that is open to several simultaneous and normative interpretations.

In this study, I gathered personal stories that depict current immigrant life. Specifically, I observed the family member most overlooked in the discourse of immigrant studies: the Asian father. Conventionally, the Korean father is recognized as a cultural administrator and a preserver of cultural hegemony. At the same time, social

stigmatization within the dominant culture has intensified the minority father figure's unspecified and ascribed social competencies. Notably, a Korean immigrant male in the United States may be prone to significant changes to his status and cognitive orientation, resulting in scenarios where he must actively and spontaneously participate in self-reflection.

## Research Questions

This section elaborates on specific interrogations about the information-gathering methods and procedures used in the study. First of all, I paid attention to the social competencies of Korean fathers. The goal was to establish several criteria that reflected structural characteristics and to validate the core frame of reference shared by Korean immigrants. Second, I focused on the fact that the social position of the father lies only within the family composition. The anecdotes, which are reflective, conceivable personal memories, help to understand the social dynamic of the research subject.

### Formulation and Social Competencies of the Korean Immigrant

My life as an immigrant in the United States first began with a promise I made to my wife 10 years ago. When we were dating in college, we had a curious longing to travel to unfamiliar places throughout Asia. When we got permission from our parents to marry, our first decision was to live our life outside our comfort zone. In many ways, our American life started with the hope that we could find abundance, as do many American dreams, but as I settled down and our family began to grow, I began to question who I was. When was the first time I examined my identity as an immigrant? Was it the

moment I had to choose my child's nationality? Or was it the first time I obtained legal status? Or was it the moment I knew unconsciously the fastest route back home?

The beginning of this study on the life of minority immigrants presents a question I often asked myself. I had mixed reactions when I chose immigration to the United States; my family asked why I wanted to give up a stable life in Korea, while my friends expressed vague admiration for my decision to move to my chosen country. Eventually, having established a new trajectory of life quite different from the expected one, I recognized that the daily lives of Korean fathers in America were very much like mine.

The goals of my research were to answer the following questions:

1. Who is the modern Korean?
2. Among Korean immigrants, how can we classify the new Korean father who makes a new life in the present United States?
3. How does the new Korean father undergo social transformations within social and logistical circumstances quite different to those of previous generations?

Guided by these questions, I focused on a family member who has long been overlooked in the academic discourse of immigrant studies: Korean fathers in the United States. Conventionally, the immigrant father, or the immigrant male, is recognized as a cultural administrator (Lee et al., 2000). That is, the father tends to reject new cultural norms, not only because such alterations challenge his supremacy (authority) but also because they require him to transform his preconceived frame of reference. Notably, the immigrant male from Korea living in the United States is significantly different from those living in or coming from the Korean mainland (Kwon & Roy, 2007).

**Ideologic Interpretation of Immigrants: Family Dynamics and Memories**

In general, humans tend to recall the past in two ways. The first relates to the rewards of past recollections. For example, the situation or problem they are experiencing may be linked to past decisions or experiences, and when group memory clarifies the present, there should be some reward for the endeavor. The memories held by each individual among related social memories are often summoned to the surface when certain social events and personal experiences overlap (Bruner, 1990; Terdiman, 1993).

The second method of memory recollection is associated with individual needs (Connerton, 1989; Olick, 1999). In other words, taking the time to reflect on the present state of one's life is a way to re-establish identity and connect the pieces of scattered memories. The most important aspect of the second method is that individuals take precedence over groups that share their memories, which is a function available only to socially mature humans.

However, interpreting personal memories through conversations or interactions with third parties has various obstacles. First, one entertains doubt about whether an individual's recollection can be accurate enough to determine the authenticity of the memory. Individuals use a variety of semantic media when they need to recall a particular memory, and they may be wary of deviating from the framework of the existing consciousness structure. This is where the social uniformity of specific memories emerges. This study focused on the cognitive learning experienced by individuals through summoning their most personal memories, rather than summoning commonly shared memories within a specific group.

In this regard, this study focused on how the acculturation stage of each participant has affected the processing of his experiences with respect to the adult learning perspective and the notion of family as educator. Additionally, I examined how a specific immigration path juxtaposes with current issues faced by the immigrant family. The study results illustrate the internal and external transformations of Korean father figures who undergo tremendous social changes during acculturation.

## Research Method

In this study I observed recent trends related to minority immigrant father figures, specifically Korean fathers residing in the United States, focusing on the latest trends of the immigrant story for Korean father figures. Some synchronic immigrant studies (e.g., Kim & Grant, 1997; Kwon, 2014; Min, 2001; Zhou & Kim, 2006) have related similar social and cultural experiences of minority immigrants, while diachronic histories (e.g., Foner, 1997; Kim et al., 2006; Min, 2011; Zhou & Kim, 2006) have only been shared in the local community.

Unfortunately, in the majority of social studies, facts and causes are the critical aspects of the study, an approach that often overlooks the human factor. Acculturation patterns connected with cultural discourse may not be fully explained by scientific facts. Sometimes, the unplanned significance of the intervention yields better results. Starting from this conceptualization, I focused more on untouched truths and memories from one who might be the most neglected member of an intact family: the father. The phenomenological approach—highlighting *verstehen* (Kim & Grant, 1997), or

intertwined stories and the meaning-making perspective—can counterbalance such a gap in the literature.

Participants in this study were fathers whose social and historical statuses have undergone dramatic alterations. Their experience stands in stark contrast to the general perception in cultural discourse that they occupy exactly the opposite position in a family, which indicated that the phenomenological approach would prove to be a highly suitable social scientific methodology. The core advantages of qualitative data analysis are formed by descriptive data that incorporate the meaning-making perspective and the participants' frame of reference (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975).

In order to minimize data bias and increase the representability of the selected group, I used two methods to gather the data. The first was an online survey for Korean immigrant families, which aimed to define the social and cultural characteristics of modern Korean immigrants as well as the practical issues they are confronted with during the acculturation process. This survey was conducted to determine the current issues faced by immigrant families, their concerns, and their transformation.

The second method focused more on the target population (father figures) through group and personal interviews. The methodology included participant observation of the respondents during social gatherings, such as holiday celebrations with family, religious rituals, and incidental interactions with children.

## Data-Gathering Instruments

There were two main inquiry processes. The first, which drew data from the online survey, addressed the meaning of ethnicity among Korean immigrants in the

United States. The second, which came from the stories and reflections of Korean immigrant fathers, focused on their experiences with life cycle rituals or immigration after 2008. The primary reason for focusing on ethnicity and the immigrant period of the Korean father was to understand and examine the significant changes that occurred during that time, both publicly and privately. For example, after the 2007-2008 U.S. financial crisis, the overall low socioeconomic status of the new immigrant diminished while an educated and economically advanced population increased.

Social cohesion among different generations has intensified. Social consolidation among the same generation has also grown, with various repercussions. For instance, there is cultural discordance between a first-generation mother and a second-generation father. Furthermore, the first generation of an immigrant family could have a different degree of understanding of the target culture.

The ecocultural perspective (Berry, 2008), which distinguishes cultural absolutism from relativism, accommodates two binary conceptions into one: the universal assumption of the emphasis of commonalities between the cultural and psychosocial conceptions of human society, and the adaptive assumption that the conventional process of human activity is influenced by surrounding ecological elements. The ecocultural perspective is connected with cultural ecology, at the intuitional level of human interaction, and ecological anthropology, which focuses more on the possibilities than environmental determinism and empirical utilization (Moran, 1982).

This study, then, was designed to (a) observe the father, the family member most neglected by academic discourse in terms of immigrant families; (b) identify the concerns

of the modern minority immigrant; and (c) collect the various voices of people who undergo acculturation or cultural transformation.

Two different methods were utilized to gather these vital data: an online survey and in-depth interviews. The online survey targeted adult Korean immigrants living in the United States, regardless of gender. The only requirement for participating in the survey was the ethnic self-description as being of Korean descent. By contrast, the in-depth interviews were targeted only at Korean males, especially fathers, who lived in the New York–New Jersey–Connecticut area, in order to accommodate in-person accessibility for the researcher. Because another point of interest for the study was new immigrant patterns, the cutoff age of participants was between 30 and 50 years, which indicated a high probability of having been exposed to American culture in adolescence. Finally, the prospective participants needed to have experienced life cycle rituals or initiated the immigration process after 2008, a year that determined the category of new Korean immigrants.

## Research Design

This study was organized into two data collection methods: a general online survey, which aimed to gather information about current issues and marginalization and clarify the stereotypes faced by Korean immigrants; and in-depth interviews and participative observations, to collect stories and reflections from and about Korean immigrant fathers. The interview approach focused on (a) studying each participant's acculturation stage; (b) collecting anecdotes that were applicable to the adult learning perspective and family as educator; (c) learning how a specific immigration path

juxtaposes with current issues faced by the immigrant family; and (d) learning how educational interventions can promote sustainable acculturation. The outline of the research design is presented in Figure 1.

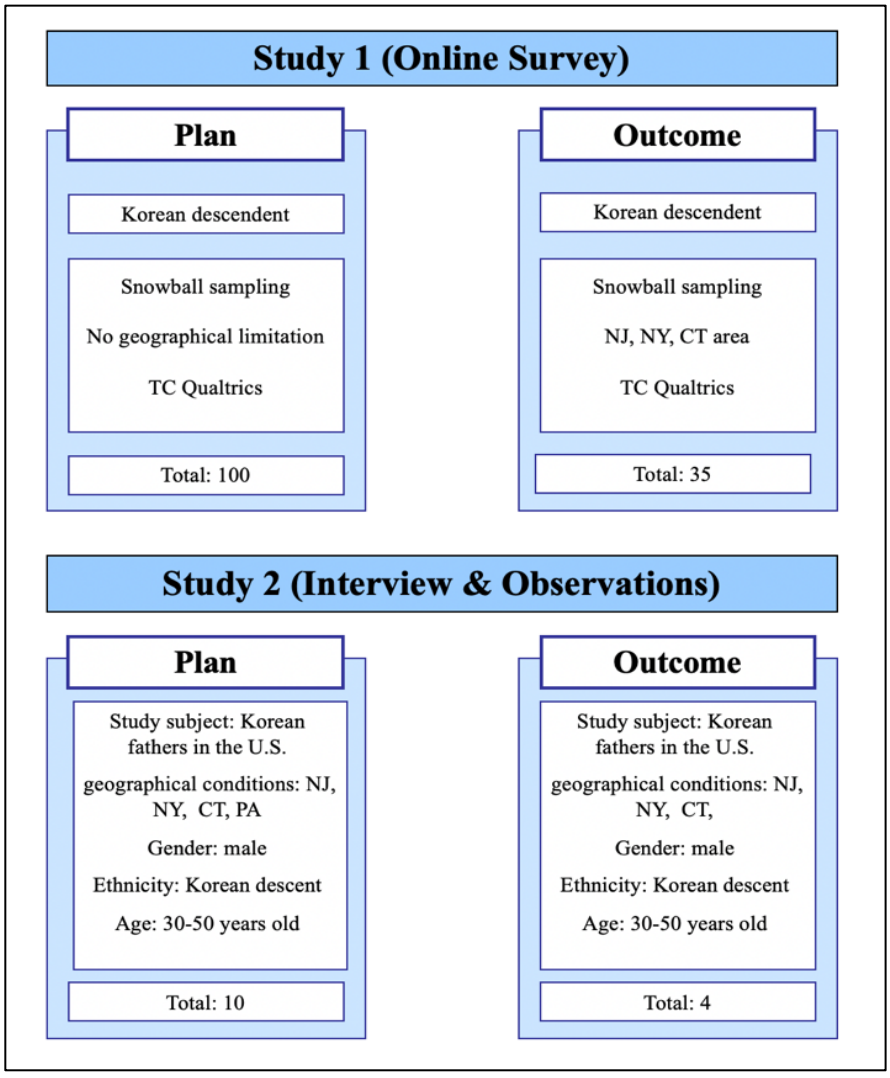


*Figure 1*. Outline of the research design

The online survey included four categories: power hierarchy, childcare, a family memory, and cultural identity. The first five questions of the survey collected demographic characteristics of each respondent from screening respondent criteria:

Korean descent and current residence in the United States. Each category included several questions with options to summarize multiple perceptions. The first two categories were related to the social conceptualization of a father and any cultural alteration (Lamb, 2010). The third category was associated with family composition and social networks. The final set of questions involved cultural affiliation and acculturation patterns.

As an extension of the online survey, the interview approach focused on (a) how each participant's acculturation stage reflected his educative style; (b) how the collected anecdotes related to the adult learning perspective and family as an educator; (c) how a specific immigration path juxtaposed with current issues faced by the immigrant family; and (d) how educational interventions can promote sustainable acculturation.

**Instrument 1: Online Survey**

A survey is a logical rationalization process to gather information using sampling, where samples are considered a representative piece of the entire group (Groves et al., 2011). The information, the final product of the survey, is gathered mostly from questions. Hence, three elements—survey medium, sampling, and questions—should meet specific criteria.

In terms of the survey medium, I used an online survey to minimize logistical issues, such as time, cost, and geographic distance. An online-based survey tool is a common format for data collection today (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). Online inquiry has increased both the volume and accuracy of the data results (Evans & Mathur, 2005). The overall probability of finding target representatives and having access to a unique

subpopulation has increased, particularly among the younger generation (Gen Z) (Wright, 2005).

Online surveys may reduce data-gathering time for researchers by allowing them to reach a target population without needing to be physically present (Andrews, Nonnecke, & Preece, 2003; Taylor, 2000). Online surveys can also help researchers to generalize data in quantitative descriptive analysis and to avoid bias in qualitative data analysis. In this study, information from the initial online survey was used to generalize the overall cognitive conception of modern Korean fatherhood in the immigrant population of the United States.

Snowball sampling is intended to strengthen the response rate in a specific target group and increase awareness of the study in the community. This method, which is a form of non-probability sampling, is useful for increasing the number of survey respondents when the research topic and target population are based on ethnic minority immigrants. Additionally, in an environment where selective sampling is difficult, the researcher can intervene to improve the suitability of survey participants.

The organization of the questionnaire also affects data quality (Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009). Studies have shown a negative relationship between the length of the questions and participant response rates for mail or paper ballot surveys (Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009; Hoonakker & Carayon, 2009). In contrast, online surveys can minimize this negative relationship by applying different media and attention checks (Faas & Schoen, 2006; Sheehan, 2001). However, a recent study indicated that hybrid forms of the survey platform (a mix of both paper and online forms) could enhance the overall response rate (Hoonakker & Carayon, 2009).

Unlike traditional paper surveys, online surveys can have lower return rates and quality problems due to limited supervision. Given this concern, this online survey included an attention check question. Hauser and Schwarz (2016) showed that a simple attention check question could increase the likelihood of accurate information in responses to the online survey. Also, such attempts are useful for increasing respondent concentration on survey questionnaires and influencing the overall quality of the data.

As stated earlier, this study was conducted to determine the current issues, concerns, and transformations that immigrant families undergo and experience through the focal lens of Korean fathers. The survey was designed to define the social and cultural characteristics and practical issues that modern Korean immigrants face during the acculturation process, specifically how social status and personal perceptions of family and self are transformed in immigrant families. As mentioned above, the survey consisted of five sections: demographic information, power hierarchy, childcare, family memories, and cultural identity (see Table 1). At the end of the survey, there was a request for further participation.

In the case of power hierarchy, Koreans fathers living in the United States are expected to have a prominent male orientation because of inherited cultural norms from the mother culture and the social structures of a minority group. The survey questions focused on such cultural trends and how their intensity and amplitude differed among the participants. Childcare is a theme that illuminates how Korean immigrant fathers have transformed their frame of reference toward modern normative fatherhood.

Table 1

*Online Survey Questions*

| Questions | Objective | Question Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Power Hierarchy | To determine how the new Korean family deals with patriarchy, which is believed to be an old Asian ideology.<br>To explore transformative cultural learning that ignites critical reflection. | In the restaurant, who usually pays the bills?<br>Who usually decides the dinner (or family meal) menu?<br>Who do you think is the breadwinner of your family?<br>Who tends to check the family bank account? |
| Childcare | To understand the new view of Korean fatherhood focusing more on friendly, nurturing fathers.<br>To determine how much the new Korean family sees and operates in real circumstances. | Who mostly takes care of the child?<br>Who mostly prepares the family meal?<br>Who tends to do the home cleaning?<br>Who tends to do the cloth washing?<br>Who mostly takes the child to school? |
| Family Memory | To explore cultural identity and its alteration with a focus on the family's personal story. | Who keeps the family's memory?<br>Who is in charge of emergency decision making?<br>Who generally takes photos during a family trip? |
| Cultural Identity | To define what ignites family conflicts.<br>Family conflict management. | If you die, who will be the primary mediator?<br>If you die, where do you want to be buried?<br>Who mostly raises family conflicts? |

Family memories are a theme that focuses on diverse immigration experiences and how the family's status has changed as a result of immigration. Therefore, if the internalized social structure emphasizes inherited social norms, which most immigrant research has argued negatively influences overall acculturation (Fiałkowska, 2019; Lee, 2019), then family memories will also prioritize the male- or father-oriented group history. This section of the inquiry was intended to evaluate attitudes that validate the common social stigma of Korean male immigrants.

Finally, cultural identity has been introduced as a variable in numerous studies to identify the degree of cultural relativity among immigrants (Chae & Lee, 2011; Dowd, 2000; Kwon & Roy, 2007). Investigating social status provides an essential foundation for comparing the similarity of the target culture with a metric of acculturation as well as determining cultural homogeneity among immigrants.

In addition to benefits of speed in distribution, number of responses, and reduced cost, online surveys offer the additional advantage of increased confidentiality. Because the survey questions probed personal and family history, respondents may have been reluctant to share this information without the assurance of confidentiality.

In order to minimize this potential drawback, the survey questionnaire was simple and straightforward. Hence, most of the answers were elicited as simple choices, such as "male (father)," "female (mother)," and the like, in all questionnaires. Simplicity is critical in online surveys because respondents are unable to seek help to improve the quality of their answers.

I used my own network for the initial participant outreach. I contacted 40 potential respondents by email and text message with a link to the online survey and asked them to encourage their neighbors also to participate.

After that, a general outreach was conducted online through social networks, specifically a message service used by many Koreans called KakaoTalk. In this phase I sent 100 requests for responses, and I excluded accounts used for corporate or commercial purposes.

These two attempts resulted in 18 responses within a week after the send-date, and some respondents sent questions through an online message service. Respondents were then contacted again 10 days later to participate in the survey. Of the 140 initial contacts, 58 potential participants were re-contacted. Those who had already responded or who stated they did not wish to respond to the survey were not contacted again. After that, a total of eight additional responses were obtained over the next 10 days.

Online survey participation forms and URLs were sent to 32 individuals, and several companies with whom I had connections were encouraged to inquire among their employees about participation in the research. Lastly, the URL was shared with the Korean contacts of my spouse. By mid-January 2020, a total of 35 responses had been collected.

**Instrument 2: Interview and Participatory Observation**

The sociological approach provides the basis for rational tests of the research hypothesis by scientifically interpreting the collected. Modern sociological approaches primarily focus on sample accuracy and the structure of the questionnaire to enhance probability of eliciting valid responses. Most sociological research is empirical and relies

on deductive methods to prove or discount the hypothesis. Research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation comprise the general structure of contemporary sociological research methodology.

Observational research methods include participant observation and non-participant observation (Hickey & Mohan, 2004). In recent years, participant observation has been considered more useful for complying with enhanced research ethics and capturing individualized internal views (Clark, Holland, Katz, & Peace, 2009). Non-participant observation can minimize the challenge of securing objective observations in a situation in which the observer maintains structural superiority.

The issue of interdisciplinary research has emerged as a critical topic in education (Repko & Szostak, 2016). Since the early 20th century, research on the family has been dramatically influenced by pluralist and relativistic views of family members (Henry, Tolan, & Gorman-Smith, 2005; LaRossa, 2005; Rosenblatt & Fischer, 2009). Anthropology from a culturally relativistic point of view, as represented by Franz Boas (1982), came to downplay unnuanced evolution and laid the foundations of linguistics, archaeology, and cultural anthropology—the basis of modern anthropology. Later in the United States, cultural anthropology eventually gained an essential place in modern cultural and social studies by combining the functionalist view of sociology.

Family research has also actively embraced this trend, focusing not only on the study of family members but also on their cultural patterns, including structural studies of language usage and social networks (Leichter, 1974, Leichter & Hamid-Buglione 1983; Rosenblatt & Fischer, 2009). Many researchers have highlighted an understanding of the basic structure of social composition of the family and a focus on functions and

developmental stages of the family in the traditional sociological perspective (Engels, 1884; Leichter, 1974, 1984; Lévi-Strauss & Shapiro, 1956; Lévi-Strauss, 1973; Parsons, 1956; Rogers, 2007; Varenne, 2007).

The basis of all these studies is the idea that human beings, as subjects, cannot exist in two different places at the same time but can occupy one place at different times. Furthermore, the family can have precise definitions in one time but cannot be specified at different times (Thomson, 1965). However, one should remember that the detrimental effects of social and anthropological developments, such as the thesis-antithesis-synthesis operation from political freedom, rationality, and the conscious inner self of the individual personality, have had a significant impact on family research as a whole. The rapid growth of a diverse minority immigrant population since the late 20th century has not only been influenced by advanced means of transportation but has also undergone a gradual change through the development of communication technology and the information revolution, all of which makes a simple definition of family structure more difficult.

In this study, which can be classified as belonging to either anthropology or cultural sociology, all cultures have value and are defined structurally by the members of that culture. From this perspective, attention should be given to multi-polarized cultural variations as well as simple dichotomous systems. Moreover, modern civilization, which extends beyond limitations of geography and time difference, has diverse overlapping and malleable cultural parameters.

Based on this understanding, I relied on participant observation and interviews to capture the emergence of complex family structures among Korean immigrants. This

method is used to obtain information from a common social network through diverse techniques. Participant observation techniques require anthropologists to observe culturally and socially distinct social phenomena from an objective point of view (Babbie, 2013).

Among the various techniques of participant observation, interviews are the predominant mode of gathering in-depth data on specific topics. The advantage of interviews is that high-quality data can be gathered through routine conversations with interviewees or in-depth conversations about specific topics (Knox & Burkard, 2009).

In interviews, it is necessary to build a rapport with participants, and this is best done when the interviewer and interviewee have a common language or culture. However, if the subject of research is a social taboo, interviews may not be entirely accurate due to social stigma (Knox & Burkard, 2009).

Moreover, it is essential to the investigation that the researcher act as an interpretive agent. How, then, do interviews differ from the existing sociological research that emphasizes objectivity? Since the late 19th century, when cognitive thinking became a mainstream academic discourse, belief in the objectivity of empirical research has weakened (Babbie, 2013). In particular, feminist objectivity, derived from feminism in the late 1900s, acknowledges several different views on a single fact. In other words, all knowledge is situated, based on specific places, situations, and locations, and the basis of all knowledge can be based on specificity and not fragmentation (Haraway, 1988).

Therefore, the recognition that objectivity itself is one of multiple possible perspectives structured by situational knowledge has created a breakthrough in the

existing method of sociocultural research that emphasizes generalization. Everything we perceive is affected by time, space, and the person or environment that mediates them.

The ordinary lives of minority immigrants also follow the same logic. The course of everyday life represents the most common way of thinking for specific classes, with variations in culture or differences in experiences. If most of what we often perceive as cultural differences is superficial, then asymmetries in the cognitive systems that make up the inner world of an individual begin with a new experience or dilemma, an event Mezirow (1997) described as the initiation of transformative learning.

The interviewees were required to fulfill certain conditions in order to participate, namely (a) has male gender; (b) is married with children (i.e., with a nuclear family); (c) has the status of Korean immigrant and has experienced a life cycle ritual (i.e., marriage, childbirth, or death) since 2008 or initiated the immigration process after that year; (d) currently resides in the United States; and (e) is between 30 and 50 years of age. The third and fifth qualifications represent key variables required for inclusion in the target population: life cycle ritual and age. The year 2008 marked a significant change in immigrant society in many ways. Many studies have shown that the lives of minority immigrants became economically unstable during the global economic crisis of that time because immigrants were among the first to suffer the effects of the crisis; in particular, those who lived on the margins of a minority society were hardest hit (Mohapatra & Ratha, 2010; Papademetriou & Terrazas, 2009; Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010; Tilly, 2011). At the same time, the global economic crisis led to a major long-term recession in Asian countries, with Korea experiencing devastating effects.

As a result of the crisis, Korean society experienced a decrease in the number of students studying abroad and an increase in the population who returned to Korea (Institute of International Education, 2010). The economic instability and rigid legal path to immigration in the United States precipitated the ouster of foreign workers with non-immigration visa statuses from many ethnic groups.

Relating to the third qualification for participation, the life cycle, this refers to adding a new page in the life story of an immigrant that requires accepting new social roles. For instance, childbirth focuses the attention of the family and transforms the frame of reference. Furthermore, a new family organization, juxtaposed with miscellaneous social and systematic alignments, results in a hyper-complex family organization (Bures, 2009). Notably, living arrangements, which require an extensive coordination of lifetime rituals and a systematic adaptation to new social roles, increase the vulnerability of the family as an automatic frame of reference. Hence, the transition period—in this case, acculturation as a minority immigrant undergoing life cycle rituals—might be an ideal phase from which to observe an immigrant's learning process.

Finally, the fifth qualification, age range between 30 and 50 years, was suggested to focus on newer immigrants. Individuals over 50 are less likely to understand modern cultural discourse because most of them were educated under military or non-democratic regimes in Korea during adolescence. Thus, Korean immigrants over 50 tend to devote themselves to one side of the cultural orientation. For this reason, the age limit of 30 to 50 was a deciding factor because these immigrants all experienced a similar global cultural discourse during adolescence.

The regional classification was also intended to limit the distance within which I could travel, given that interviews were conducted in person. It was impossible to cover the entire United States as a way to eliminate any possible independent variables, as this would have involved considerable expense. Furthermore, the dominant or adapted cultural norms may differ from region to region.

The initial intent was to record the audio of all interviews. However, some interviewees did not wish for an audio file to be created, and in other cases, circumstances did not permit recording. As required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol, if the respondent requested no recording, the interview was conducted without it. Instead, I took interview notes of approximately 1-2 pages. I then analyzed the learning method and cultural adaptation of each subject through anecdotes.

The interview period lasted from December 2019 to mid-February 2020 and consisted of four visits to an interviewee home, two participant visits to my home, and three telephone interviews. My initial aim was to conduct an individual interview with each participant. Most interviews were held at the home of either the participant or my own to increase the intimacy of the participation.

Some interviews were conducted at family gatherings, which resulted in frequent interventions from other family members such as children and spouses. If the interview occurred at a social gathering, all attendees were informed of the participatory nature of the observations and group interviews. Family members who did not wish to participate in the interview formally were given sufficient space. Therefore, some of the group interviews occurred in a room separate from the main gathering. After receiving consent,

I interviewed in a specific situation and was allowed full participant control while I decided on the theme for the day.

Because of the relatively high social intimacy between interlocuters needed to form a good rapport, it was somewhat difficult to protect personal information. Some stories had to be modified to increase confidentiality without changing the main plot.

## Data Validity and Reliability

As stated earlier, this study used a hybrid technique in the research method. First, in Instrument 1, quantitative evaluation was conducted through an online survey. The purpose of this study was to identify significant variables that appear in the process of cultural adaptation of Korean immigrants through quantitative descriptive analysis. Consequently, the importance of sampling emerged in terms of technique. In general, in quantitative evaluation, the representativeness of the target population is obtained through random sampling in order to minimize any misrepresentation in conducting the survey (Janesick, 2001).

However, in the case of Koreans, especially Korean fathers, the primary subject of this study, random sampling presented many limitations. First, I found a significant number of immigrants, but it was difficult to determine the exact size of the target population due to the nature of minority immigrants. As a result, representativeness could not be obtained by emphasizing randomness in sampling. For this reason, the study was refocused on examining the perceptions of all Korean immigrants through a survey.

The reliability of the raw data from online surveys was strengthened in three ways. First, participants of the first survey were recruited using my personal contact

information. Snowball sampling is a useful research method when the entire population cannot be identified. Snowball sampling can achieve sufficient recruitment to figure out the target population size and obtain quality responses (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

Second, in the online survey process, cross-checking the validity of answers from women and single Koreans was possible by targeting adult Koreans who lived in the United States. This was an important means of preventing the entanglement of individual and group-shared consciousness, which could be a problem if the respondents had been limited to just males or fathers.

Finally, during the online survey process, the instrument was reconfigured to increase the reliability of answers through an attention check (Faas & Schoen, 2006; Sheehan, 2001). Unlike general surveys, online surveys have the advantage that respondents have high autonomy, which can increase the quality of answers to sensitive questions (Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009; Hoonakker & Carayon, 2009). Compared with participatory surveys, such as paper ballots or respondent surveys, the response rate of online surveys is relatively low, and their disadvantage is response variation due to questionnaire composition (Hoonakker & Carayon, 2009). As a way to compensate for these shortcomings, this study introduced "Attention Check Questionnaires," which were inserted into the middle of the most common and attention-provoking questions to authenticate the participants' quality of attention. The attention check questionnaires were mentioned in the consent form to ensure that all participants were aware of the process.

As a result, Instrument 1 improved data validity by building a more comprehensive sample set and by concentrating on various types of cultural adaptation awareness shared by Korean immigrants.

Instrument 2 involved more qualitative research methods. The data obtained through the Instrument 1 were processed in preparation for the interviews. In the case of an interview, the quality of raw data was determined by conduction technique. I have seven years of experience conducting interviews as a local newspaper reporter, and I studied interview theory extensively during coursework in Korean folklore studies.

However, since I am also an immigrant and, technically, a research subject (I am a Korean immigrant father), I may be regarded as the most severely biased individual for this research, which could present a serious threat to the reliability of the interview data. Furthermore, previous acquaintance and participation in prior research were reference points for inclusion in the interview phase of data collection, as participants in the online survey were selected in part from my existing social network. This factor constituted a potential threat to the reliability of the results.

Subsequently, alternative measures were needed to cover these shortcomings in order to secure the reliability of the results. To this end, I actively used the participant observation technique. In participant observation, the researcher himself or herself is actively exposed to a specific situation, which enables the observer to evaluate if a particular social phenomenon is multifaceted (Hickey & Mohan, 2004). I was an active participant and could therefore play an essential role in securing the objectivity of a specific portion of raw data.

I used my participation in observation to promote the validity of the interview data for Korean fathers, who were limited to being research subjects. For example, in some cases, the interviews were conducted in a family setting or an extended social network meeting, where I naturally explained the research method, gave directions to the participants, and conducted observations to cross-check the credibility of interviewee comments. This generally had the advantage that the validity could be verified in the moment, without mobilizing additional techniques to validate the data.

Some of the interviews were voice-recorded in order to verify the validity of data content related to positive or negative emotions, to strengthen the formulation of reinforced rapport, and to sharpen the relatively qualitative investigation. However, one participant declined the recording when the interview topic was too personal, and another participant interviewed under the condition that voice recording not be used. As a result, it was challenging to secure the validity of the data collected through two cases without an audio record of the actual progress of the interviews.

To further ensure data validity, I actively introduced the member check technique as an alternative validity test. Member check is a technique in social science research that allows participants who provide information for research to access the collected information and to actively modify it, as needed (Hoffart, 1991; Koelsch, 2013). In general, member check is used to review the flow of detailed consciousness and emotions or in another specific situation that requires research subject access to interview reports or raw materials.

In this study, I used member-check techniques in part to approach participants in the form of a probe instead of a one-way interview. Interviewees could be involved in the

process at any time, from the collection of raw data to addressing the vertical structure of the interview. For example, immediately after the interview, the interviewer conducted a briefing on the data obtained through the interviews. Briefings lasted 5-10 minutes, during which the participants could reaffirm their comments. Also, prior to a second interview, the participant and I reviewed the content of the previous interviews and listened to the overall reflections to increase my understanding of the content. As a final validation of raw data accuracy, the participant and I read the interview notes that included my reflections about the data drawn from the interviews.

# Chapter IV

# INITIAL FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE SURVEY

This chapter focuses on the interpretation of the data collected through the online survey. Through the online surveys, I was able to analyze general tendencies of Korean immigrants living in the United States. Overall, Korean immigrants were found to maintain a trajectory of life similar to that of a typical nuclear family. Male participation in the home was relatively high, compared to the previous generation of immigrants. This represented a significant modification of the patriarchal social cognitive tendencies of Korean fathers.

On the other hand, results of survey questions aimed at cultural aspects showed a community-oriented tendency that can be classified as a general Korean family orientation. In particular, regarding cultural identities, the data showed not only strong trust in the family community, but also the tendency to maintain the surface-level representation of men in general.

## Descriptive Analysis of the Survey

The survey was conducted online from late November 2019 to January 2020, with full participation from 27 of the 35 prospective participants. Because the survey structure allowed respondents to skip questions they did not want to answer, the response rate varied, with the number of answers received varying from 22 to 27.

The goal of the survey was to provide an overview of the lives of Koreans in the United States, with an initial outreach to any Korean descendant currently residing in the country. Following a mandatory first question, the next five questions concerned respondent demographics.

Questions were structured to focus on a married individual who has a child, and some respondents reported struggling with some of the sections. However, I stipulated in the survey description that the respondents had full authority to skip or refuse to answer any questions. With this approach, the online survey had a better chance of capturing diverse immigrant voices, including those of unmarried people or married people without children.

I used "attention check" questions to monitor the attention level of respondents as they were answering questions. For example, a respondent working through the survey would find the simple and intuitive question, "Find the uppercase letter *a*." The measure was intended to mitigate the greatest disadvantage of online surveys, the excessive autonomy of the respondents (Evans & Mathur, 2005). Researchers are also encouraged to maintain a consistent format in online surveys so that the clarity of the questions is immediately obvious and additional explanations are not necessary (Wright, 2005).

This study also simplified the formation of answers for the sake of conciseness. About 80% of the questions could be answered with a simple choice of reply, such as "Father, Mother, Others," so that respondents could respond intuitively (see Figure 2). Moreover, to prepare for potential ambiguities in the concept of "father," the survey was designed to improve the accuracy of the answers by providing an example that excluded the value judgment of "father (male spouse)." I also varied the order of entries as an

attention check. This seems to have played an important role in improving the overall quality of the answers by helping respondents answer questions with greater awareness. Furthermore, in order to improve the attention level, the order of responses was placed before and after the "attention check" so that the respondents themselves could check the correctness of their answers again.

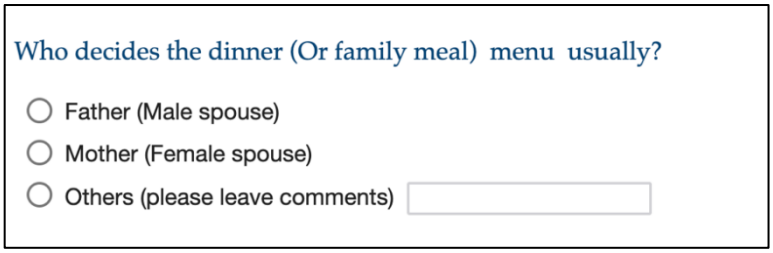


*Figure 2*. Sample survey question

The results of the survey verified that the social characteristics of new Korean immigrant fathers were identical to those of American father figures. The survey found that 48% of respondents were college degree holders, and the remaining 52% held master's or doctoral degrees (see Figure 3). The respondents' average length of residence in the United States was 15.38 years.

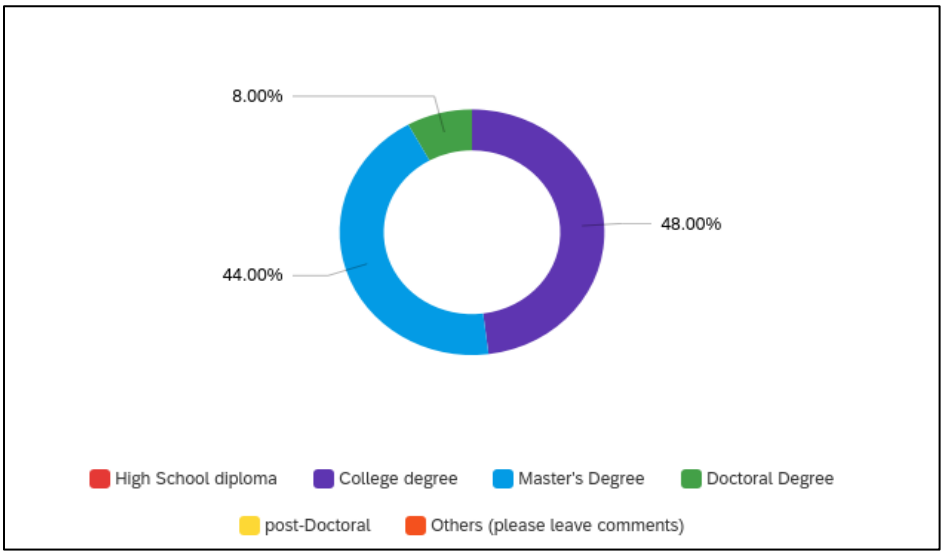


*Figure 3*. Q4, Educational experience

The results of the online survey indicated that recent immigrants tend to hold higher degrees than the previous generation of immigrants. This is in glaring contrast to existing perceptions of immigrants and suggests new Korean immigrants are raising their level of education (see Table 2). Indeed, as U.S. immigration policies are reorganized around high-income and highly educated people, the population composition of minority immigrants is changing accordingly.

Table 2

*Q4, Educational Experience vs. Year of Immigration*

| Years of Immigration/Education | 1-10y | 11-20y | 21-30y | 31-40y | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Master's | 5 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 10 |
| High School Diploma | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Doctoral | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| College | 2 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 12 |

Questions 7 through 15 of the online survey were about Korean immigrant families' perceptions of patriarchy. Patriarchy is a theoretical concept that describes the structuring of society based on the power and roles of men; most Asian countries have patriarchal cultures. Asian ideologies, such as Confucianism, have strengthened the patriarchal social structure, allowing a male-centered kinship system, assimilation, ancestral rites, and family asset inheritance. On the other hand, the introduction of new cultural aspects from internationalization has led to a reform of this patriarchal structure. As a result, in a variety of social circumstances, most Asian countries have transitioned from a male-centered to an egalitarian society (Boehnke, 2011).

The survey results showed that men's authoritative superiority still exists superficially. First, in response to the question of who pays at a restaurant, more than 60% of respondents said the male or father pays, while 30% said the female or mother pays. By contrast, women's decision-making power was evident in terms of families' at-home menus, which seems to be linked to women's or mothers' spatial ties to the kitchen.

Question 14 was concerned with the ownership of various residential spaces (see Figure 4).

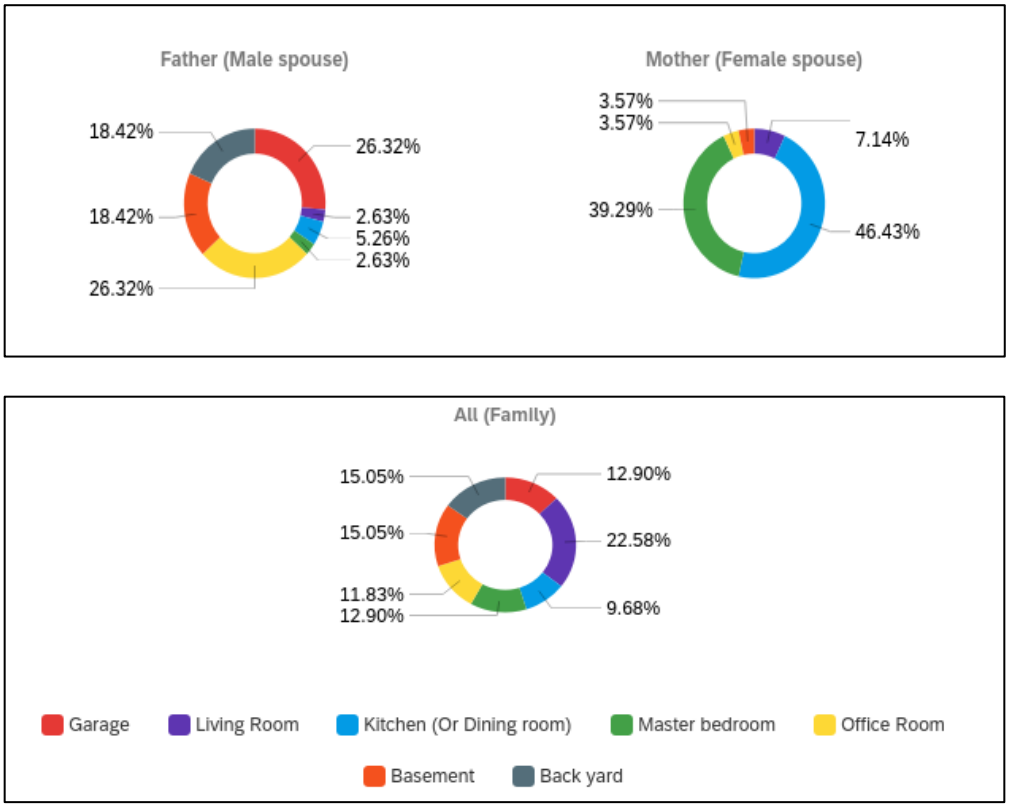


*Figure 4*. Q14, Special ownership

Answers to this question showed that women's ownership of the kitchen was much higher than that of men. Women also had strong ownership of the master bedroom. Men, on the other hand, had relatively high ownership of backyards and offices. The

external social status of Korean males has been maintained with family consent. To the question of who uses the family bank account, which is the primary indicator of economic authority, 50% of respondents said that women or mothers are mainly responsible, compared with 41% of men or fathers. On the question of the breadwinner—the head of the family in Western ideology, the most common response was the father figure; however, 42% of respondents answered that both women and men contributed financially to the family. The survey results therefore endorsed that, in terms of the financial management of the family, the women's role has grown significantly

Question 15, regarding the effectiveness of the patriarchy, was the most crucial question; it elicited answers revealing that women still held more than 50% of the responsibility for household work, while men were responsible for up to 30%. More than 21% of respondents indirectly showed that male and female members of the household shared approximately the same proportion of responsibility for household work.

The online survey therefore showed that the household composition of Korean families currently living in the United States generally allows for the equal division of responsibility. However, the survey also indicated that the father is still acknowledged as head of the household, although women's role as generators of economic value and as managers of the family has also grown. Moreover, the results of the survey validated that men's role in family diet management and housekeeping tasks has become relatively higher than anticipated, even in household chores that are traditionally regarded as women-led.

In the case of childcare, women have traditionally had the greatest responsibility. Biologically, women's role is greater because men cannot replace women in some tasks

(delivery, breastfeeding, cognitive bonding). In other words, women play a significant role in children's lives from pregnancy to the child's biological independence, while men play a meaningful role in the creation of community consciousness and social education. Lamb's (2010) study has shown that fathers' participation in their children's education was related to high academic achievement, and their modeling of masculinity was an essential part of human social education.

The section of the survey about childcare was aimed to gather information about the parenting patterns of new immigrants who may belong to newly formed families. Answers about the average lifestyle of immigrants, therefore, showed how they differ from commonly recognized parenting patterns in the United States in general.

The online survey results did not allow me to draw conclusions about any particular tendency in parenting. Respondents did not find any particular alterations in their parenting patterns. In reply to Question 16 about parenting roles, 77% of respondents said that women were responsible for childcare; no responses cited men's responsibility. Questions about specific parenting practices showed that women were responsible for children's food, school commuting guidance, laundry, and educational decisions. Among household chores, cleaning scored relatively high as a male role (father: 45.5%; mother: 40.1%; both, 13.7%). Children's school attendance was emphasized as the joint role of men and women (father: 22.8%; mother: 40.1%; both, 36.4%). Women usually picked children up from school (father: 13.7%; mother: 72.3%; others, 13.7%).

In other words, many respondents still follow typical parenting patterns. Fathers still have a secondary, supplementary role in parenting. Women retain their traditional leadership in parenting and are acknowledged to have most of the responsibility.

The survey section about family memory, which is based on patterns of recall, was intended to identify families' unconscious allocation of this task. In reply to Question 28—the most crucial question of this section to uncover family dynamics—the majority of respondents identified women as the primary holders of family memories: 68% said that women or mothers primarily stored family memories, while only 13% attributed this task to fathers.

On the other hand, 40% of respondents said males or fathers were the most critical subjects in family memory formation. In addition, in the most memorable situations such as emergencies, fathers emerged as the decision makers for 63% of respondents. The survey identified patterns in family memories and analyzed them to distinguish clearly which subjects created family memories and which subjects managed memories. Men played a bigger role in creating memories, while women were more specialized in memory management. This role division can be interpreted to mean that the role of women, which generally favors management, extends to family memory storage.

Lastly, the attitude of modern Korean immigrants toward their cultural identity was found to be individualistic and relatively relaxed towards the American culture, given their comparatively short immigration history. As noted above, the majority of respondents had immigrated a short period ago (mean score of 15 years), and their preference or sentiment for their mother culture was relatively weak.

The most controversial question in this survey, Question 30, related to where the respondents preferred to be buried upon death. I hypothesized that if respondents wanted to be buried in Korea, they must still feel closer to Korea or Korean culture, and if they chose the United States, their cultural connection to Korea must be weak. In brief, 52% of respondents hoped to be buried in the United States. One respondent said he hoped to be buried with his family, focusing more on family presence than geographical or cultural ties (see Figure 5 and Figure 6).

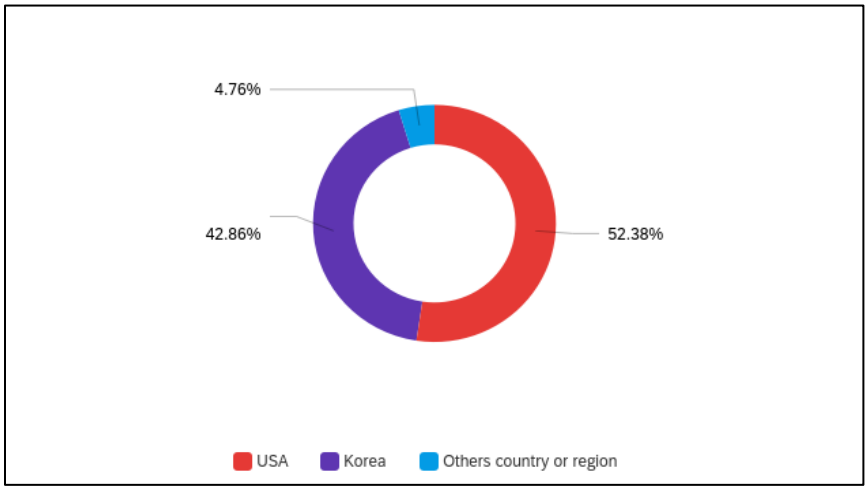


*Figure 5*. Q30, If you die, where do you want to be buried?

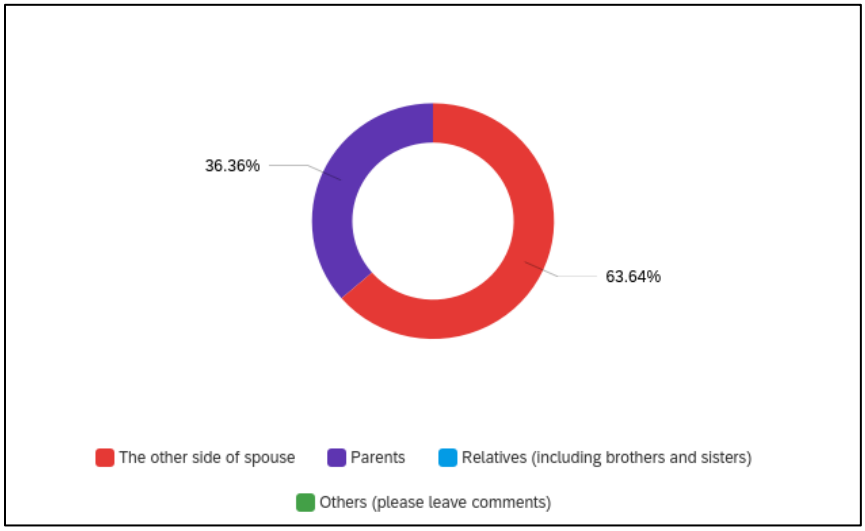


*Figure 6*. Q29, If you die, who will be the primary mediator?

Questions 31 through 34 were aimed to identify the origins and solutions of conflicts over family and cultural identity, seeking more specific causes for family conflicts among Korean immigrants. First, about 52% of respondents pointed to males as the primary source of conflict in their families. It was not possible to identify unique trends from the survey since some respondents chose "Other," which included extra comments like extended family and both male and female spouse-generated conflicts. On the other hand, many respondents answered for Question 32 that money was the primary source of family conflict; the rest of the respondents attributed conflicts mainly to family matters, including raising children.

Question 33 elicited another remarkable result, that male spouses have a strong tendency to initiate conciliatory gestures, with 50% of respondents indicating that the male or father was the first family member to apologize. The next highest response, "Other," was chosen by both male and female spouses (except for two respondents) who said no one would ask for reconciliation. These answers suggested that the tendency for men to be the first to seek reconciliation in their families was high.

In conclusion, results of the online surveys, indicated overall cultural perception patterns of Korean immigrants. Contrary to the findings of previous studies (Lim, 1997; Min, 2009; Moon, 2003; Noh, Wu, Speechley, & Kaspar, 1992; Pyke, 2000; Shin & Shin, 1999), Korean immigrants in the United States maintained a lifestyle that was not significantly different from that of ordinary American families. The father's participation in the family work was relatively high, particularly in certain fields. Moreover, it is noteworthy that in the case of households, the sharing of leadership in chores such as cleaning was relatively high.

By contrast, in terms of cultural understanding, the surveys found that Korean immigrants still preferred the composition of representative patriarchy. The fact that they recognized the father's leadership in the family's external activities or the father's role in the family as a representative of the family still signified authority. In other words, it seems that the direction of the father's overall authority has shifted from a vertical structure to a horizontal structure, as acknowledged in previous studies (Kwon & Roy, 2007; Min & Kim, 2010; Zhou & Kim, 2006), and there was a change in the ordering rather than in the hierarchical relationship. This can be interpreted as emphasizing the role of the person in charge through the behavioral pattern of acknowledging the father's authority as a superficial representation.

# Chapter V

# INTERVIEW AND PARTICIPATORY ANALYSIS

The online surveys documented the awareness of cultural adaptation among Koreans living in the United States. It was also important to obtain concrete examples of the trajectory of their lives through practical interviews with and observations of Korean immigrant fathers. Through a descriptive analysis of the interviewees' statements, it was possible to see what the four participants, who had different immigration trajectories, shared in terms of commonalities and differences. In particular, complementary circumstantial factors such as immigration status and generation in the experiences (two 1.5-generation, one first-generation, one second-generation) emerged as major features that enhanced the multidimensional view of this study. In addition, the biography of the family composition and the occupations of each individual father also validated various comparison points from similar family stages.

## Description of Participants

The general descriptive information of the interview participants regarding immigration characteristics is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

*Immigration Characteristics*

| Participant | Immigration Period (year) | Residence Location | Number of Children | Occupation | Immigrant Generation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kim (30s) | 11 | NY, NJ | 3 | Office worker | 1 |
| Lim (40s) | 40 | MI, NJ, CT | 2 | Restaurant owner | 2 |
| Jung (40s) | 28 | IA, D.C, NJ, CT | 1 | Office worker | 1.5 |
| Jang (40s) | 30 | CA, NY, CT | 2 | Teacher/CEO | 1.5 |

**Mr. Kim**

Mr. Kim has been in the United States for 10 years. He came to the United States as an international student in his late 20s. Currently, he resides in one of the New Jersey cities known as a Korean-dominated place; before this, he did not have any Korean friends except for some families known via his kids. He is bilingual and speaks Korean at home, but otherwise he mostly speaks English. He and his spouse are atheists, although her family is Protestant.

When he came to the United States, Mr. Kim did not have relatives in the country and also had a relatively shorter history of immigration, compared to other participants. He started as an international student in the United States in 2005 and stayed for a year. That was the first time he had lived outside his home country. Then he came back to the United States when he entered a degree program in 2010. After he became a “true breadwinner” (financially independent), the United States was the place where he could realize his dream. This meant fulfilling his parents’ and his dream, as his parents did not

have the required education. Mr. Kim earned several master's degrees, gained work experience, and was nostalgic about his early 20s in New York City. Furthermore, his current spouse, who had similar experiences with American life (she also stayed in New York City as a language student), had a similar preference for immigration.

Although he and his spouse did not have any family support when they decided to study in the United States, they had many friends from their previous experiences. As a result, most of their social ties originated from either their school environments or their respective workplaces. At present, Mr. Kim has another social network: families from his kids' programs, the local churches, and community centers.

Moreover, after the birth of their second child, most of Mr. Kim's family's social networking started originating in church-based events, even though they as a couple are atheists. Mr. Kim said, "Of course, some friends still want to visit their church or meet for evangelism, but many of them did not want to talk about their religion anymore." Furthermore, he stated, "Although all my family and I are not religious at all, I have a friend who is Catholic who sends their kids to a protestant organization that they believe there is better for education. Even Buddhist and more!"

Mr. Kim has many social ties from non-family circumstances. He did not share the details of his troubles with others. Furthermore, because of his fundamental, cognitive orientation structured by Asian patriarchy (which requires rigorous moderation of self-expression), it is hard for him to share individual family matters with extended family members. Hence, he had a hard time seeking consultation for the resolution of family conflicts. Unlike his spouse (who uses both physical and online support networks for socialization), he did not have any extended social support from members of the same

ethnic background who shared similar problems and conflicts. For this reason, he tried to fix things by applying other related experiences, such as those from work and social group experiences. Fortunately, such experiences can help solve problems, although not always.

When I asked him about immigrant life, Mr. Kim shared the following story. One day, Mr. Kim got the news that he had finally gotten the green card he needed to become a legal citizen of the United States. Although his family and relatives had substantial fortunes and reputations in Korea, he wanted something different. Furthermore, having a green card was somehow the turning point, as his family was now recognized as partially American. Even now, the older generation of Koreans considers being American as another way to upgrade their social status. Recently, many members of his extended family tried to emigrate to European countries because Europe is “cooler” than America, he said, adding that he regards them to be more culturally and historically advanced. This made him feel like he was somehow outdated.

**Mr. Lim**

Mr. Lim was educated in the United States for most of his education from pre-kindergarten to college. He visited Korea several times for either basic education founded by the Korean American Youth Assistance Coalition or because of other extended family matters. However, most of his relatives had already immigrated to the United States. Therefore, he was not exposed to Korean culture when he was young. He even attended one of the renowned state universities in the Midwest, where the Korean population was scarce.

Mr. Lim was admitted to the bar in the tristate area (NY, NJ, and CT) and started practicing law in New Jersey where his father owned property. From that time, he was frequently exposed to the Korean culture. Finally, he made many contacts in social networks by participating in the Korean Baseball Club and community support programs. Even though he relocated to Connecticut, he still maintained his relationships that were established through the club.

Mr. Lim met his spouse at church. Additionally, his spouse's elder sister was already acquainted with him and introduced him to her sister. He is a second-generation Korean American, while Mrs. Lim is a 1.5-generation Korean immigrant. When they decided to date, they had a long-distance relationship (upstate NY and central CT). They met each other at a Catholic church and dated for more than five years before marrying. They lived in a Korean-dominated New Jersey area and relocated to Connecticut a couple of years ago because of Mr. Lim's occupation.

Furthermore, they have many extended family members within 100 miles (mostly from outside their state). Their daughter is now 8 years old. She attended Korean daycare, which is an educational institution attached to the local Catholic church from Pre-K to Kindergarten. Unfortunately, Mr. Lim has less of an understanding of the Korean language and history, although he has visited mainland Korea several times. Conversely, Mrs. Lim stayed in Korea until high school and still has many connections there, although her parents and other relatives (her father's sister) reside in the United States.

The area Mr. Lim used to reside in is a well-known, Korean-dominated city in the tristate area. Approximately 40% of the population is Korean and almost 60% of the local businesses are associated with the Korean subpopulation. Furthermore, several city

officials are Korean immigrants or American-born Koreans. But now, Mr. Lim resides in the central Connecticut area where the total Asian population is less than 5%. His favorite restaurants are authentic Asian (Korean and Japanese) restaurants, mostly in the city.

In short, Mr. Lim's family is unique because it includes second- and 1.5-generation Korean immigrants. Unlike many minority ethnic groups' habitation patterns (Shanahan & Olzak, 1999), they reside in a familial, detached, but culturally attached area. Additionally, although they have religious ties and personal preferences, they seem less attached to their religious identity than others of a similar background.

Mr. Lim and I met under special circumstances which illustrate how Koreans connect with others, form their social ties, and develop extended friendships. When Super Storm Sandy hit, my family had recently moved to the area. Since everything was unfamiliar for us (due to lack of information and a limited social network), like other storm victims, we went to the local bakery that had a backup generator. It helped us restore normalcy and provide for the basic needs of ourselves and our 100-day-old baby. While my spouse and I charged our phones and other devices for news, our infant son exchanged sweet, welcoming smiles with another person, who was also holding a baby about the same age. We nodded in typical Korean fashion but did not talk about much except my clothing.

At that time, I was wearing a New York Giants hoodie, which immediately caught the attention of Mr. Lim's spouse; this served to extend the conversation further. After about 10 minutes of small talk, Mrs. Lim was about to leave. However, just as they headed out toward their house, Mr. Lim's spouse returned and asked for my spouse's contact number.

The following week, we found out that the day we met was a kind of reunion, as both our wives had attended the same middle school in the same year and they even had mutual friends. So, they had reunited approximately 7,000 miles away from the original place from which they had come, as legal immigrants and international students.

After that, we built a strong friendship (male and female spouses as well as children). We shared birthday parties, Christmases, Super Bowls, Thanksgivings, baseball games, family picnics, and even garage sales. Furthermore, I realized that their extended family started considering us as a part of their family. I then felt confident introducing them to my friends and family.

**Mr. Jung**

Mr. Jung is a 1.5-generation immigrant who has studied and resided in the United States for more than three decades, starting when he was a middle school student. At the beginning of his immigration process, his family had the chance to live in California for two years. However, when his elder brother was accepted by a university in the Midwest, their parents moved back to Korea to support the kids' education; this kept the three siblings together.

Hence, unlike typical Korean immigrants at that time, in which the ambitious family had at least one dominant international student residing in the United States, Mr. Jung and his two brothers started as international students with family support. He said that for that reason, he learned about America by himself. He recalled the three brothers' lives as being directed by survival-oriented social circumstances. Because of his older brother, he and his younger brother needed to relocate to Central America, where the

Asian population was scarce. Hence, Mr. Jung said, since the beginning of school, he was supposed to learn new things every day.

When it was time for all three brothers to go to college, they had to separate, and Mr. Jung became independent from that time onward. He described that era as one in which he was genuinely independent; it was also a time when he started to build an American identity with an intensifying minority ideology. He said that was the first moment when he genuinely felt that he had full autonomy.

Furthermore, when Mr. Jung decided to marry, most of his friends at work discouraged the decision. At that time, he said that his spouse thought he was more like a second-generation Korean American who liked Costco hot dogs, spoke broken Korean, and wore hippie attire. However, when they got married, his spouse realized he was more like a traditional Korean who believed in old ideologies such as the patriarchal system, ethnocentricity, and gender differences. Interestingly, Mrs. Jung defined her husband as a traditional Korean male behind the cover of an American outlook and rational mindset.

Recently, Mr. Jung's family relocated from the area where Koreans were concentrated to a new place that has a smaller Asian population. Because of this, he fears that his child and the sixth-eldest grandson of his family will lose his Korean identity. He does not want to force his child to follow his way of life, but thinks his son needs to know about Korea and should be familiar with his family's traditions. Of course, he realizes that he cannot unilaterally force his son into his way of life or even his lifestyle. Thus, Mr. Jung said, "All my enforcement of the Korean cultural idea is a suggestion for future reference."

Mr. Jung still thinks of himself as a Korean living in the United States. Of course, his nationality has not changed, and he frequently revisits Korean culture through the media and in-person trips. He also faces discrimination in this society, which makes him feel like a stranger. At his last office party, he was asked this question by his colleagues: "What kind of food do you have?" This ignited a cognitive awareness of such discrimination. He said, "When I got such a response, it classified me into a different position and built a thick wall between me and others." Besides, the recent decision to relocate to areas where not many Koreans live has led Mr. Jung to experience racial prejudice. He thinks it is unfair to his children, especially since they already face ups and downs in a school where the three of them are the only Koreans. He hopes they will be able to thrive without losing their identity as Koreans.

**Mr. Jang**

Mr. Jang is a 1.5-generation Korean American who has formulated the dominant cultural norm as Korean (he lived in Korea until the second grade) while being primarily exposed to the American culture after migration. Now, he is an American citizen who has served in the U.S. military. He has also been married to a Korean woman for 10 years; her leading cultural identity is still Korean. They have two sons whose first language is English, but they also speak fluent Korean.

Mr. Jang's family decided to migrate because of religious reasons. They moved when he was in elementary school, so he did not have a strong affiliation with Korean culture until he moved back to Korea after graduating from an American college. Because his father passed away when he was young, Mr. Jang has more memories of his grandparents and extended family members who reside in the Los Angeles area. Hence,

in the United States, most of his friends are either American or second- or third-generation immigrants.

Mr. Jang recalled his first memory of America through language usage. He was exposed to English in second grade since his school had an English class (very unusual at that time) in Korea. He already knew his family would be going to Los Angeles, so he and his family had been practicing the language for several years. However, he revisited Korea after graduating from University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2003. At that time, he had limited knowledge of the Korean culture. Although he had been exposed to Los Angeles's Korean culture throughout his entire adolescence, Mr. Jang recalled there were a number of strange incidents he hardly understood.

During his visit to Korea, Mr. Jang operated an educational consulting firm and made a substantial fortune. He also met his spouse through an extended social network. They dated for a couple of years and married in 2009. Afterwards, they decided to go back to the United States so he could pursue his educational aspirations.

This time, they resided on the East Coast for both educational and business reasons. Hence, he resided in New York/New Jersey area for seven years, and since then he and his wife have relocated to the Connecticut area for a new occupation: that of a boarding school teacher. He is now the Director of Technology and Entrepreneurship. Additionally, he still operates an education-based technology company in Korea and a consultancy firm in the United States.

Mr. Jang's family now includes his spouse and two sons. He has a younger sister who lives on the West Coast, while his spouse has extended family around the New York and Connecticut area. Mrs. Jang has one sibling married to a Korean and they reside 30

minutes away. She also has an aunt who lives on Long Island. Except for family kinship, Mr. Jang has a minimal Korean social network (school association, clients, and the families of some of his kids' friends); most of his social networks are diverse. He uses three different cellphones to contact different social networks—this seems to be the norm in his family.

# Chapter VI

# EMERGING THEMES FROM THE PARTICIPATORY OBSERVATIONS

In this chapter, the information obtained through interviews and participatory observations is arranged according to subject, focusing on anecdotes from different participants and events revealed during the interview. A total of five themes were drawn from the data (identity, parenting, religion, father awareness, and food rituals and memory). Through inquiry interventions, the personal reflections of the participants and researcher were shared. Through a series of processes, it was possible to identify commonalities and differences between father figures experiencing different trajectories of immigration.

## Identity

In order to confirm the identity of the new Korean immigrant father, one of the fundamental questions of this study—the perceptions related to the identity of the fathers—were examined through interviews and participatory observations. They were able to serve as mutual complements by showing similar family stages along with different immigration generational ties with individual life history. As a result, it was possible to recognize the consciousness structure of the interviewees in the process of individual identity descriptions.

**Naturalized American: Mr. Jang**

Mr. Jang has resided in America for almost a quarter of his life now. Although his legal status is American (he naturalized after serving in the military), he still introduces himself as Korean. Like many 1.5-generation immigrants, he did not make his decision to reside in America. Instead, his parents asked him to learn English several years before leaving for the United States.

> When I first started immigration, English didn't really matter. My uncle and other relatives were planning to immigrate to the United States, so my parents told me to stay close to English all the time. Even at school, it wasn't a common story at that time, but I had English class from the second grade.
>
> When I first went to school in L.A., I had a choice. One was to reduce the number of general subjects while taking the ESL course, and the other was just to go to school with the general students. In fact, although I was uncomfortable using English, I had no difficulty because I often reviewed what I had already learned in Korea in mathematics and general subjects. I don't know if that's why, but after twenty years, I used to speak English before I went to Korea. Of course, my friends still meet more foreigners than Koreans.

In Mr. Jang's case, English seems to be a vital representation system symbolizing the United States. He first became aware of the language's importance through his parents when he first immigrated to the United States and emphasized the spontaneity of the cultural adaptation process without taking ESL classes in the early stage of immigration. At the same time, until 2003, when revisiting Korea, Mr. Jang did not seem to use his native language to the level where his Korean could be interpreted, emphasizing the priority of the target culture in the cultural adaptation process.

When Mr. Jang came to Korea after graduating from university, he established a business related to Korea. After all, Mr. Jang had re-socialized into Korean culture for 10 years, which seemed to help reinforce his Korean identity. He served as a Korean student

council member at his graduate school and participated in a Korean church, which could be the result of his re-socialization endeavors.

During the interview, Mr. Jang shared an interesting story about his personal experience of nationality. When 9/11 happened in New York, he was home alone in Los Angeles. While watching a baseball game, the news started to broadcast the current situation in New York City and on the East Coast. While watching the horrific scene, he suddenly felt a single teardrop. He said, “I could not explain why it is happening, but I guess that is the moment that I felt more about America. I don’t know why.”

The most impressive part of the interview was the story of 9/11, which Mr. Jang himself said was very challenging to interpret. However, in Los Angeles on 9/11, he said his sudden tear authenticated his identity as American. This incident showed that identity could be established through education and experience if an individual relocated before being fully mature. This tendency is widespread in most 1.5-generation immigrants. When immigrating at a young age, there is no tendency to be significantly different from the second generation since both have a similar educational intervention to form in early adolescence.

Since Mrs. Jang is a Korean descendant and has had relatively less interaction with American culture, Mr. Jang is responsible for the logistical accommodation of daily life in the United States. He oversees paying bills, banking, insurance, and asset management, which requires language fluency and contextual understanding. Mr. Jang’s responsibilities extend to visits to the children’s hospital and educational institutions.

Despite his generational division (1.5-generation), Mr. Jang was relatively biased toward an American identity. The primary reason for such a tendency might have a

strong inclination toward the migration age. However, his primary occupation was formed through various exchange relations with Korea during adulthood, helping to reform his Korean identity. An indirect adaptation of the Korean culture was made possible through his spouse, who had no experience living abroad. It seems that a natural adaptation occurred as contact with Koreans increased after Mrs. and Mr. Jang moved to the eastern United States. Some parts of this cultural reapproval still have American values, with limitations due to particular vocabulary usage, including Chinese characters, and a lack of vocabulary understanding formed at specific periods.

For Mr. Jang, ethnic and cultural identity might differ based on economic and self-fulfillment mechanisms. However, the social environment is expected to undergo a process of re-establishing a Korean identity due to personal experiences. For Mr. Jang, Korea and the United States can be analyzed as media representing different time and locational identities. First, it seems he did not proceed to replace the collective Korean identity with his personal experience when transplanted from his parents or society in the early days of the social concept. Later, he seemed to maintain an experience of emphasizing the American identity in the socialization process through a formal U.S. school intervention. The American identity emphasized in the formal U.S. curriculum appears to have evolved to reinforce the model minority view of self-selection and the choice of representing a family or community, creating both individual experiences and gaps.

Finally, during the period when Mr. Jang visited Korea after graduation, the American identity became valuable in the new space (Korea in 2003 when Mr. Jang moved to Korea). However, as he increased his contact surface with the Korean culture,

cultural assimilation occurred. This trend seems to have been strengthened by marriage to a Korean woman and having a business related to Korea.

**Limitations of World Citizens or Rule of Thumb: Mr. Kim**

Among the facts of the interview, Mr. Kim had a very solid view of the country. In addition, his level of the consciousness of immigration was relatively low, showing a rigid tendency for Korean consciousness.

> I have never doubted myself as a Korean. When the first child became a U.S. citizen, I asked myself a lot of questions. I thought the bottom line was to let him find his own country. In fact, many Korean immigrants give up their nationality by mentioning military or tax issues. On the other hand, the Korean government has recently offered a variety of benefits, including programs that provide child support from as little as $100 to as much as $600 per month. But I chose only U.S. citizenship for my child because I wanted to give my children more choice.

For Mr. Kim, the state was used as both a belief system and an important tool for defining himself. He used the state as an essential concept composing his identity as a U.S. foreigner. For this reason, he acknowledged the differences that may arise from superficial differences (children of U.S. nationals) and personal experiences (children's language in the U.S. education system).

I also observed a firm ego maintaining a strong moral legitimacy on its own, noting it is morally unacceptable to receive state support as an economically superior class—referring to the recent tendencies of the surrounding Koreans. As Mr. Kim said:

> I can't forget the experience of the center that I visited for the first time to get a green card. It was only two blocks away from Costco where I went, but I turned on the navigation, so it was never too late. How tense was the hour of arrival, waiting in line, taking fingerprints, and taking pictures. My wife and I were exhausted in an hour. And when I received my first green card four weeks later, there was nothing. My wife and I were happy because of we now able to travel to Korea freely.

In forming a new identity, Mr. Kim stated that legal status is important. He defined himself as the first generation of immigrants and had a strong memory of the space where he first received his legal immigrant status. He remembered the change in legal status by describing feelings of tension and anxiety in fingerprinting for the green card. He recalled the moment of joy, peace of mind, and stability of the status when he left the center.

What was unusual was that Mr. Kim was not confused about his identity at all. Of course, his relatively short immigration history seems to be essential to this, but unlike other participants, he seemed to have a relatively rigid view of the state. His comprehensive contact with the American culture formed during his childhood (he enjoyed the NBA and hip-hop culture in adolescence) reflected that he had experienced the United States as a language school student before deciding to immigrate. It seems to have been a significant opportunity for overcoming the hierarchical cultural disposition represented by cultural toadyism.

Mr. Kim, the only first-generation immigrant among the interviewees, maintained a slightly loose form of immigration. Although gaining legal status has been an essential trigger for immigration, he did not intend to be naturalized. Mr. Kim's immigration, interpreted through observations, showed that his focus on immigration justifies his ordinary living, which has a significant link with Korea.

Several structural characteristics made it possible for Mr. Kim to conceptualize immigration differently. First, Mr. Kim was an immigrant with high economic stability. Parents who live around Gangnam, which represents economic prosperity in Korea, have enough economic power to send their kids to study abroad. Mr. Kim's family, therefore,

has a relatively high social status in Korean society. Because of this, it seemed natural to say he was aiming to return to Korea even after obtaining permanent U.S. residence. Hence, Mr. Kim's immigration intention was relatively loose and flexible.

Second, Mr. Kim's level of education was very high. He already had teaching experience in a specific field after obtaining a master's degree in Korea. It seemed possible to guarantee various job choices according to his high education level (he obtained another master's in the United States).

Third, Mr. Kim's cultural flexibility was also high, which seemed to impact social environment and personal experiences significantly. He initially maintained social networks from previous experiences as an international student in the United States in the early 2000s. These extended social networks played a significant role in his family deciding to reside outside Korea. Similarly, Mr. Kim's current extended social network was also concentrated more on the outside ethnic, social networks, like colleagues at work, business partners, and local neighbors. Despite this tendency, nuclear family-centered experiences based on fragmented social networks throughout the following immigration to the United States had a significant impact on Mr. Kim's identity formation.

Mr. Kim's ability to form social networks, as revealed during the interview, was highly appreciated, creating a certain level of intimacy with all the survey participants. Mr. Kim, for example, has a slight acquaintance with Mr. Jung, who used to reside at the same place with a similarly aged child. Mr. Kim and Mr. Jung have networked with other fathers outside their families. Mr. Lim met Mr. Kim for the first time during the interview and became an extended social family member after relocating to Connecticut. Their

children and spouses extended the social relationship. Mr. Kim became a central social network operator covering all the interviewees.

Mr. Kim could settle the softened identity by the rule of the individual experience rather than the identity confusion of a fragmented identity. He seems to have expanded his perception of Koreans while maintaining a slightly loose form of immigration and having a perception of Koreans as a nationalist classification system based on education and personal experience, rather than an identity explained by the existing classification system.

Rather than limiting immigration's boundaries to legal status, Mr. Kim's case shows atypical voluntary identity at the conscious level. Of course, it is not easy to answer the question of whether Mr. Kim's identity formation is close to his identity as a global citizen. Under certain conditions, the main emphasis is still on the external expansion of Korea or the social networks it maintains, yet he continues to fail to adapt to the culture (e.g., choice of career due to financial problems, maintaining masculinity for patriarchal perception).

**Diversification of Identity Through Connection and Disconnection: Mr. Jung**

When I started the interview, I anticipated that Mr. Jung's residency in the United States was determined by personal experience. Because he classified as a 1.5-generation immigrant (he completed his postsecondary education in the United States) and because of his relatively limited contact with Koreans while obtaining legal immigration status, I anticipated his post-adult identity would naturally have an American tendency. However, the participatory observations reinforced that Mr. Jung was very inclined to a Korean identity. This could classify the experience as fossilized cultural dogma.

First, Mr. Jung's family showed a typical male-centered ideology, which is the distinctive traditional cultural awareness in Korea. In addition to the succession system, the family position of the eldest son of the eldest son transcends women's normative social status, including age. Mr. Jung himself realized that because of his son—the only son of the extended family, he could have upgraded social status among his immediate family. For example, it could be analyzed that the use of the parents' condo as their own home during the visit to Korea was characteristic of the family focus on birth inheritance. Mr. Jung implicitly stated that his father's home was his home, suggesting a social position in the extended family.

Despite his personal experience in American education and a limited cultural connection with Korea when his three siblings decided to reside in the United States, Mr. Jung seemed to have a robust patriarchal perception, which is very unusual for the 1.5 generation of Korean immigrants of his age. Mr. Jung explained the Korean culture itself had been fossilized for about eight years when he and his two siblings moved out of their parents' presence in ordinary life. Compared to Mr. Jang, who migrated at a relatively early age, Mr. Jung might have had substantial educational intervention until middle school. In other words, life in Los Angeles in his first two years of immigration and his immigration with his parents did not lead to a change in their relatives other than as a geographical relocation. However, the last of the eight years, living with his brothers, ignited a transformational alteration of himself, adapting to new cultural norms.

Such a change identified Mr. Jung as being in a state of deficiency. Mr. Jung himself created fossilization of the Korean identity by experiencing a disconnection with the Korean culture at this time. After entering university, he became a member of a

voluntary group of minority immigrants and experienced the connection of Korean culture again, but it did not seem to make up for the shortage of eight years.

Mr. Jung also experienced the transplantation of American culture during the disconnection, but this tended to be recognized as an extension of the Korean culture. The tendency to use verbal expressions in the immediate family found in anecdotes was likely a variation created by a culture cut off by Mr. Jung's peculiarities.

Contrary to Mr. Jung's insistence on teaching exaltation as a reason for using honorifics when referring to children, I found a tendency to use honorifics mainly when admonishing children or under certain conditions. For example, to mediate when a child quarrels with peers, Mr. Jung called the child using an honorific, which could be seen as an expression of an authoritative hierarchical order.

Even more surprising is that the grandparents also used honorifics for Mr. Jung's children, an unusual form not found in ordinary Korean families. The use of honorifics with for grandchildren—especially granddaughters—is hardly observed unless such expression is used in the opposite way. Mr. Jung uses the term *Ga pung* (family tradition or family custom) when he addressed the intention of usage. In other words, for Mr. Jung, *Ga pung* is a tool for reinforcing the legitimacy of one's actions, intensifying his rigid frame of reference that generates from his personal experience.

Therefore, Mr. Jung might have a distinct tendency when the definition of a property needs to be defined among extended family. Before we scheduled the interview for the second time, Mr. Jung visited Korea for his annual checkup. He said, "Although I have health insurance in the U.S., the general quality and price of health service in Korea is much cheaper than here."

When he visited Korea this time, Mr. Jung had minimal experience except for a hospital visit. Nevertheless, what struck me during the interview was the recognition of the place. As he described his last visit to Korea, he said, “I was staying at my home.” I had to specify to what he was referring when he said “home”; he replied, “Oh, I am talking about my parents’ home.” In his utterance, I clarified his cultural ideology tendency again since he referred to the place he stayed at in Korea as “home.”

Mr. Jung’s perception of Korea, which can be deduced from recent personal experiences, is the first place to provide economic benefits. Mr. Jung visits Korea every year for regular check-ups and simple surgeries, as he can receive higher-quality medical services in Korea rather than in the United States. At the same time, the expression “my home” indicated he still recognizes the area where his parents live as a mother country. After all, recognizing one’s return point as the area where Korea is, or grandparents live is a testament to the relatively strong identity of Koreans.

Mr. Jung has a solidified semantic system as a place where his immediate family lives. On the other hand, the space represented by Korea has the characteristics of economic and psychological regression and is the symbol of cultural identity. It also suggests that some eight years of childhood breakthroughs have characteristics not normally found in Korean immigrants. Moreover, the immature domain of Korean cultural understanding arising from a cultural breakdown experience is a significant statement making Mr. Jung unique.

**Second-Generation Immigration? Or 1.75-Generation? Mr. Lim**

Mr. Lim was the only second-generation immigrant among the participants in the interview and, at the same time, the most patriarchal. He was a person with a gap

between consciousness and authentic life. His father's perception became a significant frame of reference where he showed a particularly familial view. This difference in the cognitive system was attributed to personal experience.

First, Mr. Lim was forming a relatively intensive biological social network. Mr. Lim's fathers and relatives have experienced immigration for more than 40 years and have a laminated structure of blood ties, adding the spouses' extended families. Mr. Lim's spouse had about 30 immediate family members within 100 miles of their residence, as all the immediate family members have experienced immigration.

Mr. Lim analyzed that his Korean identity is relatively weak in terms of Korean language fluency. However, Mr. Lim showed that Korean not only provided additional practicality but was also equal to English as a native language. By using English mainly in conversations with children, he implied English was his successors' native language, consistent with their identity as immigrants.

In the same manner, Mr. Lim was more active in communicating in English than in Korean. Of course, he had no problem listening to Korean, so he used Korean and English spontaneously. However, if he needed a more precise explanation, he needed to speak English. Through this, Mr. Lim had English as his native language and a solid background of identity as the second generation of immigration.

However, the Lims decided to change jobs and migrate for personal and economic reasons; they found a relatively increased understanding of Korean culture or identity. Moreover, some Korean tendencies already learned by personal experience could be interpreted due to an in-depth reflection on the figure of Mr. Lim's father.

## Parenting

There is no doubt that the most significant alteration in these father's lives occurred in their role of parenting. Lamb (2010) indicated that fathers' involvement in the family has a positive influence, regardless of East or West. Also, one common trait was that the fathers' involvement in the child's education is determined by the overall industrial society. In this section, the anecdotes indicated the differences in the research subjects perceived next-generation training. In particular, the differences they saw in language education were significant because they were related to the area of cultural adaptation. As a result, all subjects showed a tendency to choose their children's education method based on different types of epistemology but showed a strong dependence on economic and environmental factors.

### Contradiction of Values and Fatherhood as a Model: Mr. Jung

Mr. Jung's family recently relocated from an area with a large population of Koreans to a community whose residents have been exposed to fewer Asians. The majority of the population consists of a homogeneous ethnic group. Mr. Jung fears that his son, who is the sixth oldest grandson in the family, may thus lose his Korean identity.

> Every action I (have) made for my child is a suggestion. If my child doesn't want it, I can't help it. But I know my child will accept my suggestions. And knowing (the) Korean language means that he could be bilingual eventually, and I believe it can be an important advantage in his future.

After they relocated, Mr. and Mrs. Jung discussed language education. Mr. Jung considers learning Korean to be one of the essential parts of inheriting family traditions for a child living in the United States—not just a way to learn about Korean culture. Yet Mr. Jung's wife, who grew up in a relatively free-wheeling household, is worried that a

Korean child living in the United States may have difficulty studying due to the language barrier. She thus prefers to focus more on English, with the view that the child can learn Korean later.

For Mr. Jung, Hangeul (the Korean language) and Korean culture are not just variables that represent identity. Instead, according to Mr. Jung's own personal experience, speaking Hangeul may allow his child admittance into a group of other Hangeul speakers; he believed that belonging to such a group in college could help determine his child's social identity. Hence, knowing Hangeul may increase his child's probability of belonging to a group and intensify his competency in terms of social merit. For Mr. Jung, at least, the Korean language thus has a useful value—one that goes beyond its application as a simple mediation and cultural symbol for Koreans.

Mr. Jung believed he should be a model for his children. The family custom is to use honorific titles when addressing their children. This is also thought to be a possible example of an educational intervention. It likewise emphasizes the recognition of conventional social positions, which may be unfamiliar to new family members. Mr. Jung sees this type of education around etiquette, in which children are taught to behave in socially acceptable ways with acquaintances, as a way of transmitting essential virtues in the name of the family tradition.

In Mr. Jung's case, the "fossilization" of the mother culture in his own childhood also seems to have impacted his educative style significantly. As Mr. Jung said, his own fundamental perception of the mother culture and the rules of Korean etiquette were fossilized during his eight years of disconnection from Korean culture as an adolescent—when he lived in the United States without either of his parents. Hence, Mr. Jung said that

he wants to educate his son intensively around the manners and etiquette that he should demonstrate as one of the family's eldest sons. At the same time, Mr. Jung still has a strong belief that his children will follow his directions around educational interventions.

In summary, Mr. Jung has chosen to be a model himself when it comes to educational interventions. This unique approach has full acceptance among the extended family members, even as it seems not to be tolerated by society as a whole. The Jungs' son is attracting the attention of the extended family because he is the eldest (and only) son in the nuclear family. Mrs. Jung, on the other hand, uses a hierarchical educational intervention method that focuses on the social structure. For example, when the Jungs' child argues with other children, Mrs. Jung gives verbal attention to the child and ensures that appropriate actions are followed. Mr. Jung, on the other hand, tends to wait until the action or incident is over. He then tries to ignite the conversation using honorific forms.

**Environment- and Value-Centered Education: Mr. Lim**

As mentioned earlier, Mr. Lim was the only second-generation immigrant interviewed. His family was also the only family to send its children to Korean language school every weekend. After Mr. Lim's family moved to Connecticut, driving to the nearest Hangeul school took more than 30 minutes. The school's inconsistency with Mr. Lim's religious beliefs was also a challenge (Mr. Lim is a Catholic, but the Hangeul school his children attend is run by a Protestant institution).

Mr. Lim opined that language education is necessary. Therefore, his daughter began attending the Hangeul Sunday School when they relocated to their current neighborhood. Before that, Mr. Lim had thought that his children needed to learn Korean mainly to communicate with their grandparents, as he did himself. As long as his

daughter could hear and understand Korean, he thought it would be fine. Although few Koreans lived nearby, it seemed a good idea for his daughter to know Korean, given the situation with his parents.

When Mr. Lim thought about it consciously, he also recognized that—given his wife's vital role and the fact that her own mother tongue is Korean—their daughter should learn Korean. Still, if his daughter does not speak English accurately, he does not believe she can appropriately form part of the society in which she lives. Speaking English as one's native language is of paramount importance in order to take root in U.S. society. Yet Mr. Lim did not feel anxiety in this regard. His elder daughter does not just speak English; it is her mother tongue.

Mr. Lim did not seem to have a specific educational perspective. He did, however, conceptualize the idea that a father's presence plays a significant role in the whole-person education of a child. As mentioned earlier, the most important reason for Mr. Lim's job change was to improve his interaction with his kids. In the interview, he noted that he had thought—at first—that he would have more time with his children when he inherited his father's restaurant. However, the lack of human resources has recently become more pronounced as the restaurant has grown. Thus, it has been not as easy to spend time with his children as Mr. Lim had hoped.

> I want my children to find what they want to do, rather than (what they) have to do. As a minority immigrant, I know that studying hard and getting a good job could please my parents. But in the end, 'who I am' is (what life is) all about. So, what I'm going to do is get my kids to have a good environment. To do that, money is (what it's) all about. That's why I'm in Connecticut right now.

Although Mr. Lim stated that his children's education was a significant factor in deciding to change his occupation, he seemed not to have particular inclinations or ideas

around its implementation. Possibly, the idea that he would like to spend more time with his own kids was based on his parents' absence during his adolescent life. Mr. Lim showed a greater focus on autonomy during the interview process, even when social interaction with his children was possible. He tended to focus on what they perceived as his given role, for example, rather than enjoying time to play or engaging in other leisure activities with their first child (8 years old, female). Likewise, he participated in daily childcare routines, such as changing his second child's (3 years old, male) clothes and diapers, but did not enjoy playing with him.

Mr. Lim said that his fundamental educational viewpoint was to focus on what his kids want to do, rather than insisting they prepare for high-status jobs with the aim of being recognized as successful individuals in society. Statements like this one, from Mr. Lim, seemed possibly to be a reaction to the social pressures he has experienced as a second-generation immigrant. Mr. Lim and his older brother both followed the "model minority rules." They have achieved all the requirements: prestigious occupations (lawyer, accountant) and educational paths (both were top state university graduates).

However, Mr. Lim can also be interpreted as emphasizing the importance of the social environment in raising children; his children's education was a primary deciding factor in moving to their current residential area. Over the course of the interview, Mr. Lim decided to relocate to his parents' house, which is in a better school district. I was thus able to establish that Mr. Lim seemed to value the importance of social environment in his children's education.

**Stemming from a Firm Educational Creed in Childrearing: Mr. Jang**

Mr. Jang seemed to have a strong educational viewpoint, which revolved around creating an immersive learning experience for his children. Hence, he visits Korea with them every year—as well as other Asian countries such as China, Vietnam, and the Philippines. He believed his sons should, and will, have full authority to decide their own future. As a father, he saw his role as one of showing his children that there are more opportunities than they might imagine. For this reason, he has focused mostly on offering them experiences; he thought this is the best value a modern father can offer. Prior to the last interview, Mr. Jang had just visited New York City with his family. He had organized trips to a museum and art galleries there to give his children hands-on experiences.

Based on the participatory observations, Mr. Jang tended to show bias towards American culture. This may have manifested during his immigration experience. Migrating to the United States, which was perceived as comparatively advanced at the time, was an opportunity to improve his family's social class. When he returned to Korea, his fluency in English likewise gave him great merit—it meant that his value rose in the eyes of the host culture. The decision to attend an Ivy League university immediately after his marriage seemed to be based on a similar decision process.

Mr. Jang did not see the value of establishing an identity by learning Hangeul as an advantage of language education. Instead, he considered the accumulation of tangible and intangible assets to be the result of learning various languages.

Meanwhile, Mr. Jang seemed to have a more fully developed relationship with his children than the other fathers. During dinner with his family, for example, Jang was

responsible for ensuring that his two children finished eating their food (one is 3 years old and the other is 6). In the other families, the mothers were generally the ones disciplining children who did not eat properly. Likewise, when Mr. Jang put his child in the car, he showed a subtlety of care in the way he checked his child's seat belt and how he drove.

Contrary to earlier appearances, Mr. Jang was also observed to deliver admonitions in a slightly raised tone of voice. However, this modification of his interventions seemed to be related to each child's disposition. Mr. Jang's first son was outgoing and somewhat aggressive, while his second son was relatively introverted and submissive. Mr. Jang thus tends to use generally soft interactions in his communication with the second son, yet slightly aggressive interactions with the first.

> I think the most important time in (a) child's education is (in their) middle and high school days. That's why I've set up an education portfolio for each child. Everything is planned, (just) until high school. (The) following decisions should be made by the children themselves. That's why I spend a weekend in New York every month, to visit art galleries and museums. Of course, when traveling abroad, I was trying to have a variety of experiences with (the) children by going with them whenever possible.

In terms of academic performance, the position was somewhat reversed. Mr. Jang's first son, who as a first grader was currently in the lower grades of elementary school, had a relatively high level of interest in a specific field (Army, patriotism, and guns). He thus intended to focus on this area in his educational program. In this context, the focus of language education also diverged from one that was linked with learning about one's Korean roots and identity.

> I think they are Korean, so (this) language is what they need. I am not pushing them to master Korean. I would let him attempt to learn multiple languages, including Chinese, Korean, and more.

As these remarks show, Mr. Jang regarded Korean as one of many languages in which his sons could develop their skills. Yet the Korean language, in Mr. Jang's eyes, was far from being a concept of identity that must be learned. Instead, it seems that he estimated the value of language education from an economic point of view. For instance, he mentioned that visiting China every year to learn Chinese language(s) would secure his son's competence and gain him merit in the future.

In summary, Mr. Jang highlighted "education through experience" and expressed a firm educational creed. As an education expert (he runs a consulting firm for college admission), Mr. Jang recognized education as the most powerful legacy he can pass on to his children. Yet, even as Jang stated that he was applying his own style via a specialized education program, both his level of perception and his methodology were similar to those of other parents. Still, in Mr. Jang's efforts to strengthen his children's exposure to more diversified social interactions, he can be seen as taking the initiative in raising his children.

**Emphasis on Identity and Diversity as an Immigrant: Mr. Kim**

Mr. Kim values cultural heterogeneity in his family—especially regarding language as one aspect of a core ideology around Korean identity. Hence, he took a firm stance on promoting Korean as his children's native language. When the Kim family visits Korea, for example, they bring back Korean textbooks and traditional Korean storybooks as essential items to teach their children. (Before obtaining permanent residence, only Mr. Kim's wife and children visited Korea. Now, since Mr. Kim has obtained legal status, the whole family visits Korea every year.)

The Kims' first child did not have any problems with language acquisition. Their second child, however, had language delays and received support from the state. This increased Mr. Kim's overall interest in, and concerns about, his children's educational achievements.

Mr. Kim said he was worried about a learning disability when he first heard that his child was having difficulty learning the language. Naturally, both Mr. Kim and his spouse also began to put a higher focus and value on their children's academic achievements. Mr. Kim visited Korea to educate his children—providing educational materials not just for the Korean language, but also for mathematics, science, and social studies. Mr. Kim also began to participate in several of his child's afterschool programs, including swimming, piano, and private tutoring. Individualized educational programs are generally found in Korean families when they anticipate that their children's educational achievements will be judged via standardized tests. Thus, Mr. Kim's educational methods can be analyzed as relatively typical of modern Korean families. This trend in education seems to be related to their immigration history:

> When I first lived in the U.S. and raised my family as an international student, the hardest part was money. I couldn't say that I was a completely independent (household) head. (I had) my parents' help.

Based on Mr. Kim's statement, his approach to educating children seems to have been greatly influenced by his personal experience. Mr. Kim saw adding economic value as an important way to solidify the family's ability to function effectively. Economic independence was also a top priority, given his own experience of being assisted by his parents during his education. This led Mr. Kim to value economic independence as an important aim of his method for educating children.

Mr. Kim is thus actively engaged in his children's extracurricular activities. Along with ensuring their command of Korean as the primary language, Mr. Kim's actions could be interpreted as aiming to improve his children's overall academic achievement. Of course, agreement with one's spouse is vitally important when embarking on such a variety of educational and extracurricular activities. Mr. Kim's own overall interest in extracurricular activities was higher than that displayed by the other participants. For example, he had a relatively high interest in sports and other extracurricular activities offered by local community centers. He was also responsible for helping with his child's homework every other day; this could be regarded as a high level of involvement in his child's education.

> The most surprising thing about raising children today was how weak the American education system is. Probably before I received my first permanent residence, I first knew that I had to send my kid (to) summer school during summer vacation. My wife and I didn't have much information, and I didn't realize how late it was. So, I decided to send (my child to) a summer school program at a Korean church nearby. After two months, I realized that summer school in the United States was a way to buy time for parents, rather than to educate their children.
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> When I first went to Korea with a green card, I sent (my first child to) a private kindergarten for Korean language education. At that time, I was amazed by every aspect of their interactions. The school sends daily notification(s), via text message(s) and email(s) and small reports from the teacher. Even my kids still remember that school.
>
> Lastly, I didn't go to Korea last year, so I had to set up a summer school again ... I decided to send (them) to the Korean Community Center, but it was hard to find educational value except for giving my children lunch. Even now, one of the themes that I argue (about) with wife is summer school every year.

This anecdote showed Mr. Kim's focus on function in educational interventions. He argued that while the curricula offered in private educational institutions in Korea are diverse and information is provided to parents daily, education in the United States focuses on working with specific subjects rather than on student achievement. As a result,

Mr. Kim has been more satisfied with Korean educational institutions that have a functionalistic approach rather than Korean-run educational institutions in the United States.

In summary, Mr. Kim showed an inclination to generalize—based on his own personal experience—when it comes to his educational perspective. In terms of his children's Korean language acquisition, Mr. Kim sought an education that is relatively focused on identity. At the same time, he highlighted the educational consequences of his children's standardized test scores. This tendency is found among Koreans in general, and Mr. Kim seemed to advocate it. Because of Mr. Kim's relatively short history of immigration and his frequent visits to Korea, there are strong similarities between his educational perspective and that of modern Koreans. Thus, he has focused on English in terms of language use. His experience of selecting a summer school for his children—which was focused on educational outcomes and programs—may be a consequence of Mr. Kim's normative educational perspective.

## Religion

Religious studies have been an important research topic in Korean immigrant studies. Min (1992) indicated that religion, especially Protestant, occupied a significant position in the process of community formation and development of Koreans in the United States. In this study, rather than focusing on religiousness as a specific religion or immigration pattern, the focus was on the influence of religion on the fathers' perceptions and the change of religious consciousness as social networking. As a result, the study participants overall did not show an exclusive character for a particular religion.

However, unlike the history of Korean immigrants who sought social safety through religious groups, they showed a strong will for individualistic religious beliefs.

**Strengthening Economic Gain and Ethical Education via Religion: Mr. Jang**

Mr. Jang is a member of the 1.5 generation—he is a Korean American who immigrated to the United States as a child and experienced education in both countries. Growing up, he identified as a "church kid." His life as an immigrant has been strongly intertwined with the Protestant religious beliefs of his family of origin. On his mother's side especially, several members of his extended family migrated to America for religious reasons.

Thus, for Mr. Jang, Protestant faith is not just the ideology he learned from his family; it is also nearly synonymous with immigration. Yet, when Mr. Jang offered a fairly detailed explanation of his own perception of Protestant, my conclusion was that it was based on his in-depth consideration of religion rather than on a daily, mission-based activity.

Mr. Jang's wife, on the other hand, did not previously have much experience with religious rituals and is somewhat skeptical of it. Mr. Jang tries to accommodate her lack of familiarity and avoids pushing her. Thus, Mr. Jang went to church while he was living in New York and New Jersey, yet he did not frequently participate in worship services if his spouse refused. After moving to Connecticut, Mr. Jang went to church less often, due to his preference for attending services at a non-Korean church. His spouse's lack of strong religious beliefs also influenced Mr. Jang's religious life.

> Korean Protestant is all about the community—who belongs, who (does) not—and focus(es) very much on the edge or boundary between you and me. But (the) American church or, let us say, American Christianity, (is) that not clear-cut on boundar(ies). So, you can easily be in or be out.

In other words, Mr. Jang has Protestant beliefs in general. Yet the particular social behaviors that he has experienced in Korean churches—such as community-centered thinking, compelling and diverse needs for community participation, and coercion to attend worship services—have made Mr. Jang distance himself from these churches. For example, Mr. Jang said that the greatest challenge of belonging to a Korean church was to maintain his status. He also had strong objections to social apprehension, as conducted among members of the Korean church.

On the other hand, Mr. Jang believed that American churches provide conditions for people to focus more on their faith. He thus prefers a nearby American church, which he could visit more freely. Still, he has yet to begin regularly attending church there, due to spousal opposition (his spouse is reluctant to visit the church, due to her lack of language skills and religious beliefs).

> Since the beginning of immigration, religion has been an important factor in determining immigration with families. That's why (my) religious creed was all about my Protestant faith. As I raised my children, however, I realized how important the various services offered by religious institutions were. Moreover, as I moved to the East Coast, the religion (became) important to serve as (a) social networking tool.

Uniquely, Mr. Jang described the church in economic terms, stating that it could provide him with faith and help relieve his anxiety around an uncertain future. His religious beliefs also emphasize solidarity with those around him—who are morally symbolized as his neighbors. Mr. Jang sees this social networking around religion as a vital prerequisite for success.

> It is often thought that religion has moral value only, but I think it has economic value also. For example, religion emphasizes morality, which not only reduces the stress of an individual but also creates various connections. As a result, you can get more value during a couple of hours on Sunday!

In summary, Mr. Jang's religious beliefs had their origin in his mother's faith—an essential family value system that affected his overall immigration history. He has frequently been in and out of the church system, after his marriage and relocation from the West to the East made him struggle to find a church that was the right fit. Yet Mr. Jang's religious creed has not changed. In the midst of the birth and migration of his children, Mr. Jang's frequent contacts with Korean churches seem to have added to his discomfort around certain aspects of these churches.

It was also recognized that the robust collectivist viewpoint, seen in the normative Korean consciousness system, contrasts with Mr. Jang's own consciousness structure—which has a strong individualistic viewpoint. This has had a significant influence on Mr. Jang's strong rejection of Korean church culture. Mr. Jang's family, according to this analysis, has tended to use religious groups to support the education and economic interests of their children.

**Changes in Religious Perspective: Mr. Jung**

Mr. Jung was born into a Protestant family. His parents were not strongly dedicated to their religious beliefs, yet he still classifies his family as a religious one since his grandparents had a strong belief in protestant and requested that he follow their path. Mr. Jung did not specify why he became a protestant but said it was 50% for social reasons and 50% for religious authenticity.

Mr. Jung recalled that his first experience in the church was at age 5 in his hometown of Gangnam. He cited his grandparents as the most significant factor in starting his religious life. They were doctors at the time and seemed to have had a profound influence on—and connection with—Mr. Jung in his childhood. Mr. Jung recalled that his grandfather was the influence behind his first visit to the church.

After Mr. Jung's family moved to the Los Angeles area for two years, they used to go to a Korean church—mostly for social support. Mr. Jung's primary purpose seems to have been building a social safety net and accumulating tangible and intangible assets, via the religious community. This tendency is similar to that of the first generation of immigrants.

> Unlike Korean churches, (in) American churches you can quietly go alone and watch (the) worship. You won't be asked where you come from or what you do and, most of all, you don't have to work for the church if you do not want to. I think that religious belief should not be with bondage. In this case, spontaneity is the key when such bondage (is) formulated.

As in Mr. Jang's case, Mr. Jung respects the normative value of faith in general, while showing negative feelings toward the Korean church. He thought that church attendance has shifted, moving from worship based on religious beliefs to seeking social benefits as a sort of alternative community support. For instance, when he married and had a baby, he first went to find a Korean church that was big enough to allow his family both individual mobility (autonomy) and social support. Now he feels that the religious institution is more like a social support system.

Notably, for childrearing, Mr. Jung put a higher value on religious support than on any other social support. During Mr. Jung's early fatherhood, he received a variety of types of educational support from the church, such as early childhood education, parent

education seminars, and Sunday School activities. Even after relocating to Connecticut, Mr. Jung still relied on a particular religion-based educational program for his children during spring break and for extracurricular activities.

In other words, Mr. Jung assumes that religion is a series of ritualization processes that must be completed in line with an individual's fundamental freedom of thought. However, he argued that there is an inevitable aspect of using a religious institution as an essential social system, to meet needs for social support that are not otherwise available when living as a minority immigrant.

Although Mr. Jung rejected the group-centered social networking style of Korean Protestant, he seemed to have a desire to be included in the group. Indeed, even after moving to Connecticut, he had a strong desire—for a period—to maintain the social consistency of attending Korean churches in New Jersey. Yet the church's inclination in the Connecticut region, where a relatively small number of members are clustered, differed from Mr. Jung's own somewhat individualistic inclination. He has not yet found a church to attend regularly.

In summary, Mr. Jung is an immigrant of the 1.5 generation who has maintained a relatively strong Korean identity. The religious side, however, contrasts with the social environment, in which there is increased contact and awareness of the Korean cultural discourse. As a recent immigrant group member, Mr. Jung is somewhat reluctant to be recognized within a Korean immigrant-dominated religious community.

This trend was visible in all the interviewees, who seemed to be influenced by the diversification of cultural adaptation and the economic stability resulting from a relatively spontaneous social environment. They distinguished between a religious

institution's characteristics in terms of personal fulfillment of the religious faith and the public social goods it offered. The focus was on the availability of educational facilities for the early socialization of immigrant newcomers.

**Religious and Atheistic Characteristics: Mr. Lim**

Mr. Lim, the only Catholic among the interviewees, had a robust individualistic view of his religious experience. During the interview process, Mr. Lim's family and mine naturally became acquainted. Spending Thanksgiving and Christmas together became a chance to deepen the families' relationship.

Mr. Lim told me that he wanted to invite our family to the church's Christmas party. At that time, we could not visit Mr. Lim's house in Connecticut because it overlapped with a vehicle maintenance period. Mr. Lim expressed his regret once, but he did not ask again after the polite rejection of the party. I wanted to interview Mr. Lim and thought it was a good opportunity to learn about his religious views, so I visited Mr. Lim's church for the Christmas service and party without notifying Mr. Lim. Of course, a rental car had to be used, which cost more and was inconvenient. However, my family also wanted to travel, so I was happy to visit Mr. Lim's church.

Mr. Lim's church was so distant that I had to drive about 30 minutes from his home. Mr. Lim, a Catholic believer, had said his was a large church that came from Massachusetts because his church is almost the only Catholic church in the central Connecticut region. The church, however, was a small rural church with a capacity of about 200 people, surrounded by residential neighborhoods.

Fewer than 150 believers attended the Christmas worship. All members seemed to have a certain level of networking (all seemed to share their names and occupations).

Some of them we were able to identify from previous social events, such as Mr. Lim's second child's first birthday. At first, Mr. Lim and his family were surprised to see us. Their warm smiles showed signs of our surprise appearance, but mainly expressed appreciation.

There were only very slight signs of Mr. Lim's religious orientation. Even in his early 40s, he is still a fan of basketball star Michael Jordan (he collects Nike's Air Jordan sneakers) and wears hoodies or short-sleeved t-shirts—a different look than that of most Korean immigrants of his age. On the day of the Christmas service, the majority of the Korean worshippers wore formal or neat attire, while Mr. Lim wore a padded parka, white and black sneakers, and black Nike sweatpants.

Mr. Lim's structure of consciousness, as inferred from this scene, seemed to see religion from a more typically American perspective. Considering the aspect in which religious beliefs are interpreted as the fundamental rights of human beings, Mr. Lim's choice of clothing put a more substantial weight on an American cultural interpretation. This was in line with the reason for which he invited us to a Christmas party at his church. There, he did not introduce us as new members of the church or to a pastor. Instead, he introduced us to his acquaintances. Of course, some acquaintances already knew us through Mr. Lim's family, but they did not make any additional effort to evangelize or bring us into their community.

Mr. Lim's family, on the other hand, was actively using religion as a supplementary social service network. For example, while living in New Jersey, Mr. Lim used a baby-care class run by a Christian institution until he began using a daycare center run by a convent. He participated in events put on by other religious groups in the town,

and he showed no sign of objecting to participating in these social events because of differences in religious beliefs.

In summary, Mr. Lim's view of religion seems to have a precise individualistic ritual structure. This is in line with essential U.S. values and reflects the preliminary tendencies of the second-generation immigrant. As a minority immigrant, Mr. Lim did not reject the possibility of accessing other religions as an additional social supplementary service network. This is testimony to his openness to religious perception.

**"Like a Religious Person, Not a Religious Person": Mr. Kim**

Mr. Kim's relationship with organized religion was very insignificant. He had never had a connection with the church prior to immigration, and most of his extended family members have rejected religion. Their rejection of religion, however, does not aim to disparage others' religion. Instead, it aims to share an appreciation for tolerance and love—the universal truth of religion.

Believing in tolerance and love as universal truths, Mr. Kim showed the tendencies of a believer rather than of an atheist. Although he participated in religious gatherings as a child, they did not seem to have had a strong enough influence to change or control Mr. Kim's fundamental ideas.

> When it comes to religion, I think that any religion is the same. Islam, which I encountered by chance when I was in college...or my parents—who had required (in my) childhood that (I be) engaged in Protestant and Catholic activities for a while—there was some accident happening, which guided me to step back from religion.
>
> For example, the antagonism toward general religious beliefs has been increased, (and I am) confronting the relatives who (are) addicted to pseudo-religion in the name of freedom of religion. I do not want to deny religion itself. You can find peace of mind through religion. Furthermore, I think it's an alternative way to understand the world in some cases. On the contrary, all the gods have asked us to love and understand our neighbors, which can be

> interpreted as basic moral humanity. Then all religions share the same fundamental values: love and tolerance of others.

Although his spouse has religious convictions around Protestant, Mr. Kim—like Mr. Jang and Mr. Jung—felt great antagonism toward the distinct sense of community in the Korean church. Thus, Mr. Kim did not join any religion after immigration; he did not have faith in a particular belief system.

Mr. Kim, too, saw religious immigrant life more as a public social service that offers necessities for minority immigrants. At first, Mr. Kim's family used religious daycares for their infant children, even as he still expressed a strong sense of religious rejection. Mr. Kim has developed a defense mechanism against various forms of evangelism; he disguised himself as a believer of the opposite religion. In recent years, Mr. Kim and his family have tended—even more—to recognize religion as a kind of public social service.

In summary, Mr. Kim was the weakest respondent in terms of religious affiliation, despite his relatively short period as an immigrant. His perception of religion had weakened as he faced the ruin of a particular religion before immigration. At the same time, it was found that his views on religious discourse involved a comprehensive analysis of his own personal experience of spirituality. Therefore, I would consider him a "believer in the fundamental values of love and tolerance," without a particular concentration on any single religious community.

## Father Awareness

As mentioned in the introduction, one vulnerability of new Korean immigrant fathers is a social conceptualization of the father figure. In the process of re-socialization

associated with the method of immigration, multiple ideas about fathers are naturally formed through a direct connection with the individual's immigration history. Participants in the study also came up with different types of father images, adapting personal experiences to various empirical rules that appeared in the process of legal status acquisition and cultural adaptation.

**Ahead of the Times, Yet Lacking Access to Wisdom: Mr. Jang**

Mr. Jang acknowledged that the social authority and status of Asian immigrant fathers in modern immigrant life has significantly changed.

> I do not think the general Korean father's perception of his role (has been) transformed vividly. I still meet many Korean fathers who think bringing some money to their family is their (whole) job. However, (as) a father who lives in the United States as a minority, I have learned new forms of the father figure—(being asked to fulfill) diverse social functions, including child nurturing and family work. I think there are three factors making changes: social, cultural influence, and self. I have learned (that the) kind of father (I will) be in my family is what I learn from society and what I want to be.

During the interview, Mr. Jang briefly mentioned his father, who died when Mr. Jang was young. Because of this noticeable lack of a remembered father figure, Mr. Jang tried to make adjustments while operating in his social position as a father himself.

The people Mr. Jang most frequently mentioned were his mother, who died a few years ago, and now a sister who lives in the West. At first, Mr. Jang was reluctant to mention his past during the interview—possibly since he had lost his mother just a few years prior and had long felt the absence of a father figure.

In the various participatory observations and interviews, Mr. Jang showed a keen awareness of a father's responsibilities. Whenever his family visited a foreign country with him on his business trips, Mr. Jang ranked family accompaniment as a top priority

and offered his children a variety of practical experiences. He also valued taking his children to New York City each month to visit museums and galleries for educational purposes.

On the other hand, Mr. Jang—unlike the other fathers—also emphasized physical appearance on family occasions and often posted photos of his family's daily life on social media. Posting his trips and activities with his children on social media seemed to be a way of informing the public that he was fulfilling his fatherly responsibilities.

Thus, Mr. Jang seems to be consciously trying to meet society's common expectations of fathers and to seeking recognition in the public space. He may be trying to compensate for his own absence of a father by focusing on "looking like" an ideal father for his own children.

Among the four fathers involved in the interviews, the other participants selected Mr. Jang as the one with the most modern image as a father. Mr. Jang spends a lot of time playing with his children, organizes extracurricular activities with his children every month, and—most of all—does some household chores and participates frequently in childcare.

Mr. Jang could be interpreted as refining his own image as a father to match the ideal proposed in the modern discourse. Yet he may also simply be a model individual who spontaneously and naturally carries out a variety of fatherly actions that are seen as ideal—according to modern social requirements—while sharing social awareness of his behavior.

**Personal Experience of a Typical New Father: Mr. Kim**

In Mr. Kim's perspective, the father image has two aspects. One is an "interpretive father" who can find sources in his personal experience; the other is a "functionally necessary father" in modern discourse. Mr. Kim's immigration experience showed an evolving process of consciousness around the father figure—one that has resulted in a very different sort of father figure, which could appear only via a process of dualizing individuals and society.

> I have not thought about fatherhood, but I can say that we are not (in) the same social position anymore. When I was young, we had a strict rule in our family. Every holiday, males should be served first while all female family members should prepare the food and formally serve them. Meanwhile, on the male side, you had three different tables to which you could belong, based on your status in the family. For instance, grandfathers and oldest sons and grandsons (sat at) the same table, including outside relatives who visited our family. The younger male family members had a slightly smaller table. Finally, the male kids shared a small table, while the oldest grandson could stay with (the) grandfather's table.
>
> After the grandfather passed away, the rules were changed. Now, all male family members still use the same table. However, without any classification of gender, all family members participate in food preparation. I even recall (that, at our) last holiday dinner table, my sister's pet dog shared the same meal as our family members.

Mr. Kim explained the differentiation between his grandfather's and his father's generations through his personal experiences. The father's position changed, from the meal etiquette described above to a social era in which men's superiority or value-oriented view was no longer taken for granted. Mr. Kim cited his father as an essential player in this modification of fatherhood. Mr. Kim's father, whose educational achievement was not very high (he was only able to study as far as early elementary school) was not an egocentric figure and showed a relatively 21st-century fatherhood style in his interaction with Mr. Kim.

Mr. Kim's father stressed his image as a friend to his children; he prepared meals for his children and expanded his relationship with his son. Even now, he makes weekly video calls to his son, and the bond between Mr. Kim and his father is considered strong. Mr. Kim's father-in-law also had a friend-like image rather than an image of a distant patriarchal father. Mr. Kim's father-in-law could even be seen as a "girl's daddy" (a nickname for a father who puts his daughter ahead of his son) when his daughter was growing up. That was nearly 30 years before more recent trends—in which many Korean fathers now see being called a "girl's daddy" as more valuable than any preference for sons.

Mr. Kim seems to have continued the father-figure evolution, using his father as a role model and striving for similarly close bonds with his own children. This personal experience is applied as an essential value and Mr. Kim seemed to follow his father's model as that of normative fatherhood. Mr. Kim was involved in extracurricular activities with his children and was also always responsible for one or more children during family meals. He likewise followed up on the children's responsibilities to carry out certain household chores (cleaning, taking out the trash, driving, and shopping).

On the other hand, stereotypes around Asian immigrants have intensified and seem to lean toward more negative connotations. For instance, due to Mr. Kim's image as an economic provider for his family, he may be seen as an authoritarian character from the outside. Yet, within the family, this was interpreted as fulfilling the vital duty of ensuring his family's financial well-being and continued existence. The father also has diverse social and functional obligations to fulfill as part of his authority. This structure is

in line with the Western "ladies first" consciousness, which implies that women and more vulnerable members of a family must be able to make functional decisions independently.

Mr. Kim viewed the period in which he received financial assistance from his parents when he was in graduate school as a time when he was unable to fulfill a father's responsibilities. Thus, after getting a job, Kim clearly defined the economic independence of his nuclear family as the most fundamental value on which he must concentrate as the father of the family.

> I think there is a part to admit that, (in) general, Korean fathers need to change. Since the man was the mainstream for thousands of years, we have to make a balance. However, when the wife says, "(do) what an American father does"—that kind of thing, I cannot stand.

Mr. Kim said he also felt social pressure to display the fatherhood style required by his newly adopted culture. He was already making various attempts to maintain his image as a friend-like, caring, and supportive father, but he perceived there to be a high level of pressure in American society. Given society's highly imperfect stereotypical view of Asian fathers, this social pressure seemed strong. Yet Mr. Kim pointed out that the internal pressure for modification from wives was the hardest of all; the general social pressure for transformation was moderate by contrast. He said that in immigrant family gatherings, fathers tend to be "graded"—comparing the amount of time each father spends with his children and how and when he does household chores.

In conclusion, Mr. Kim has tended to shift toward modern fatherhood by using his own father as a role model, within the evolving consciousness process around his Korean identity. However, with the new social status gained through immigration, the pressures around Mr. Kim demand more progressive changes from him, although he has already experienced tremendous change. These pressures come at Mr. Kim from many directions,

including both the pressure to adapt socially into a more normative father in the given society, and the social stigma and stereotypes around being a Korean father in general.

**The Most American Yet Superficial Korean "Ubervisor" Father: Mr. Lim**

Mr. Lim told an impressive story while being interviewed: On the second day of the visit, we had a chance to talk about when he decided to change his occupation: In mid-September, Lim's family informed us that they had decided to move to a new occupation. I had noticed that they were debating this issue. So, when we had typical family-friend meetings, they used to discuss the issue with us. However, because the conditions were dramatic, they were hesitant to make a decision. This decision would be the biggest distorting dilemma after organizing their family.

Mr. Lim said his father, who owned two restaurants in CT and NYC, requested that he take over the CT restaurant. The restaurant was approximately worth more than several million dollars, and each year he expected to have a significant net income. However, if he moved to CT, he would need to leave his career as a commercial lawyer, and his family includes a 7-year-old daughter (at that time), who would also move to a new location and lose her friends. At first, he did not seem concerned with his social relations; not only was the new place familiar to his family, but also, he perceived it as not far from their current place (it is a 2-hour driving distance).

For Mr. Lim, the father was a murky image comprised of various relationships. Mr. Lim's own father was his only model; his fathering style was identified as Korean yet was nearly unique to him. It was only natural for Mr. Lim to repeat his father's actions when interacting with his own child.

The influence of Mr. Lim's father was also significant when it came to making a job change. Mr. Lim said he decided to change his occupation from lawyer to restaurant owner because his father, who previously ran the restaurant, was aging. Mr. Lim also wanted to spend more time with his children. Although Mr. Lim's understanding of Korean culture—especially its food culture—was limited, I can indirectly confirm that his understanding was expanding as he continued to operate the restaurant. Recently, Mr. Lim's expression of his Korean identity tended to be relatively more substantial, such as in introducing Korean food to local broadcasting stations.

In the immediate family, Mr. Lim's father still holds a patriarchal position, as can be detected in daily activities. When I visited his restaurant for an interview, Mr. Lim's father was extremely reluctant to speak and tried to leave the place as soon as he possibly could. Mr. Lim explained that this behavior was common and typical of his father's reactions when he finds himself in unfamiliar situations. The female family members agreed with Mr. Lim's explanation of his father's behavior.

Mr. Lim's own behavior was very similar to that of his father. For example, when the other interviewees' family members visited Mr. Lim's home for a social gathering, Mr. Lim was cautious about speaking and tried to escape the situation. Mr. Lim's inclinations may have partly been shaped by his professional ethics as a former lawyer. Yet, overall, his father's influence as a frame of reference for social behavior seems to have been significant.

Mr. Lim often followed his father's behavior in the process of playing with his children, too. He frequently used rude expressions such as *ya* or *Imma.* These words are not to be used with children as they have connotations of treating them contemptuously—

as subordinates. Likewise, when Mr. Lim played with his kids, I often witnessed acts like tripping them or wrestling them with his arms. Mr. Lim said he had learned such forms of interaction from his father and thought these actions would increase his bond with his children. While still maintaining similar remarks and play with the children of the family, Mr. Lim's father's "play style" was still accepted by his children as routine.

Mr. Lim tried to legitimatize his own behavior by focusing on the normative father figure he has experienced himself. This is similar to the most typical image of a Korean father—which still has a conscious structure of maintaining economic stability as the primary goal. Mr. Lim's use of derogatory slang with his children and his engaging in physical play that seemed somewhat violent also appeared to be influenced by his most significant role model: his own father.

This tendency was easily identified in the family relationship as a whole. While it was not mentioned explicitly, Mr. Lim tended to prefer a son to a daughter. When they found out that their second grandchild was a boy, Mr. Lim's parents hoped that the family would live closer to them. After excessive persuasion, Mr. Lim decided to change his occupation—inheriting his father's restaurant.

**Bridging the Gap Between Ideal and Reality, via a Firm Belief: Mr. Jung**

In Mr. Jung's case, his personal experience and social evaluation were fused in his view of fatherhood. He seemed to have received an extremely male-centered cognitive structuralization through the relationship between his grandparents and his father. For instance, his acknowledgment of the use of honorifics, when educating his children around etiquette, can be seen as aiming to maintain long-standing values.

Mr. Jung reaffirmed his conviction in talking about his educational views for children. He strongly believed that his own fatherly opinion should be recognized as the "final opinion" for his children. Two points of interest arose in the interview, referring to Mr. Jung's and his children's education. First, regarding language education, Mr. Jung predicted that his choice (he insisted on the Korean language as his children's mother tongue) would not only help formulate the children's ethnic identity: it would also, in his opinion, be of immense value economically. In the course of the interview, I asked: "What can you do if your child does not want to learn Korean?" He replied, "I cannot help it." At first, I interpreted his reaction as a normative response—one that advocates children's autonomy. However, in the immediately following answer, he said he was confident that he would convey to his child the valuable wisdom gained through experience and his son would follow it. He held a strong belief that his children would voluntarily follow his own firm beliefs. This could be seen as the most patriarchal intervention mechanism. Mr. Jung's perceptions were also showed through events during the participatory observations.

On that day, Mr. Jung shared an anecdote. In his family, one thing bothered them when it was raised in the discussion: rigid gender role(s) in family and family tradition. Unlike ordinary modern Korean families, his family used honorific forms for the younger generation. For instance, when the extended family gathered, his son—the "only son" in the (larger) family (not literally, but his extended family had four girls)—would be subjected to the use of honorific forms, even though he was the youngest member of the family.

Mr. Jung asserted that his mother tended to use honorific forms to ensure that the grandson learned elegant expressions first. Also—based on the deep-rooted family notion of preferring a son to a daughter—he should have extra respect because he was the first and oldest son in the family. At first, they had several arguments regarding this since such a custom is no longer entirely stable among modern Koreans. Also, his spouse believed that any child should have equal respect. Hence, his spouse kept saying that most of his looking and thinking system was very much like Americans or modern individuals, except for this point.

During the discussion on this issue, I posed several questions and concerns about his actions. First, since he was a modern idealist, I asked Mr. Jung to think about the other kids (who were girls) and expressed further concerns about his confusion when he interacted with different social norms from the outside society. Adding to my opinion, the other families also tried to convince him to think differently. The other fathers asked him how he felt when Mr. Lee's older brother received such attention while he did not. Also, what if he had another child who was a girl?

Interestingly, Mr. Jung did not change his mind, although most of the members asked. He provided two reasons: past and education. He believed that he had gone through such a life without any conflicts or problems; also, because his child would take greater responsibility than any others, such prestige was necessary. Similarly, he commented that, because his son would receive and learn from American education and culture, his son would then understand and learn the difference quickly.

For the next step, I tried precisely opposite tactics to convince the others who were not totally against his idea: using tolerance and referring to family tradition. After

his long speech, I changed my position towards his side and gave a more rational reasoning. As individuals should have their uniqueness and points of view, their uniqueness should be respected. I used the term “family tradition” to persuade others. Despite my expectation, most of them did not accept the term easily, while Mr. Jung took the term to support his own stance.

As can be seen from this interaction, Mr. Jung had a sturdy egocentric frame of reference. When he encountered other perspectives that seemed not to match his own, he was apparently inclined to apply his old beliefs, which originated from his experiences. Mr. Jung’s fatherhood style is thus likely to be influenced by either his persona or his reflective models, including his grandparents and parents.

Of course, while experiencing immigration, some of Mr. Jung’s conscious structures tend to be inclined to the American perspective. Yet he did not seem to overcome his Korean family’s particular consciousness structure and showed a more fossilized, “old-school” structure at the core. Mr. Jung was even aware of this tendency yet was not willing to change it. In other words, Mr. Jung’s fatherhood style will not change, as long as his consciousness structure is shared with his core identity.

In summary, Mr. Jung seemed to have developed his consciousness structure by semi-integrating different cultures in a process of dualized cultural adaptation. Mr. Jung’s tendencies as a father seemed to have been adapted and shaped by his own father’s inclinations, based on his Korean family’s particular identity. This has led Mr. Jung to place a conscious emphasis on authority and positional configuration in his family.

Despite his 30 years of life as an immigrant and his understanding and adaptation of the different consciousness structures, Mr. Jung has chosen to continue the family

tendency to focus on authority—which was created in a personal endeavor to achieve male self-esteem. Yet, contrary to the patriarchal view shown in the external configuration, some autonomy is emphasized in Mr. Jung's own family. This creates an unusual situation, in which the two extremes of fatherhood are embodied simultaneously.

## Food Rituals and Memory

Among cultural indicators, food is a measure of change; at the same time, it can be an element that shows the process of change in an individual's daily life. In particular, certain foods that contain cultural implications can confirm the process of cultural adaptation along with individual identity. Drummond (1999) indicated that a series of food-related processes (preparing, serving, and ritualizing) eventually formulate significant cultural metaphors. In this section, various cultural adaptations can be identified based on anecdotes about the specific foods of each participant. Especially kimchi and several nostalgic foods were identified in the interviews and participatory observations.

### Food and Memory in Identity Reconfiguration: Mr. Lim

Last year, Mr. Lim's family and mine had the chance to watch the Super Bowl together. For us, the Super Bowl is a newly constructed social ritual—one that, as for many people in America, includes both memories and specific foods. While we watched, we ate typical American Super Bowl foods: chicken wings with fries and sodas.

As usual, our spouses also wanted to eat kimchi to get rid of the greasy taste of these foods, but Mr. Lim did not want kimchi. Although he owns one of the most renowned Korean restaurants in central Connecticut, he does not think of kimchi as "his

food." Instead of kimchi, he wanted a "real Coke." The expression "real Coke" comes from Mr. Lim's idea that any other brand of flavored cola is fake, while the original Coke in the red can is genuine. Interestingly, I was also not in the mood for kimchi on that day. I drank a "fake" cola instead—one that came in a black can. Suddenly, the three of us felt that these barriers underlined our differences. Mr. Lim's wife called him "an American guy" when he showed these signs.

That single moment resonated at many levels. I had already realized that Mr. Lim had a different conceptualization of Korea and its culture. Yet the rest of us (Mr. Lim's spouse and my family) also demonstrated different types of acculturation cognitions or perceptions; I also did not desire kimchi at that moment. This showed that, although one may believe one has a crystal-clear cultural identity, individual reactions may still vary. Interestingly, the total duration of acculturation or exposure to the other culture did not fully explain such differences, because my spouse and I—who have been in the United States for the same number of years—had different needs at that moment.

I am still unclear about whether such a reaction, with Mr. Lim's spouse defying his identity, was appropriate. Nevertheless, I think it was necessary not just to show respect for Mr. Lim's cultural identity (as reflected in his Super Bowl food and soda choices), but also to ensure tolerance of the minority opinion. Mr. Lim is an enthusiastic epicure of all kinds of food, particularly Japanese and Korean, which may seem contradictory in light of the above encounter. He eats Japanese noodles more than twice a week and eats Korean dishes nearly every day. Hence, it was hard to imagine that he did not enjoy kimchi at all.

Since that night, I have noticed my own evolving cultural dilemma. I have reconsidered my reaction, while altering my language usage and putting further thought into Mr. Lim's understanding of Korean culture. Interestingly, that night marked the moment when I felt like I knew him a little better. Although the rest of us may have wanted to soothe ourselves by eating kimchi, I imagine Mr. Lim did the same for a long time—during the years that he was adapting and dealing with his own new cultural identity as an American.

For Mr. Lim, kimchi has an ambivalent cognitive configuration. First, it is a cultural dynamometer of ethnic identity. While three of us (Mr. Lim's spouse, my spouse, and myself) see kimchi as a symbolic choice for reducing grease in food, Mr. Lim was using Coke as a symbol for grease removal. In other words, Mr. Lim used an entirely different cultural code from the other three.

The second cognitive authentication of kimchi is a peculiarity that represents personal memorabilia. Mr. Kim said during the interview that he started his restaurant without a real awareness of how much labor was needed to sustain the Korean side dish culture. Until then, he had not felt the value of the seemingly "little" things his mother did at the restaurant. But this truth about her food, as represented by kimchi, has become an important symbol in Mr. Lim's running the restaurant and introducing Korean food to the area.

When we visited Mr. Lim's restaurant, he and his extended family offered us a very nice Korean dinner. His mother joined us at the table while his father refused, using a typical excuse that he had already eaten. They suggested I try a spicy Chinese-style noodle soup, which is a new signature dish of the restaurant. We also had *galbi* (Korean

barbecue), barbecued pork belly, a sushi plate, and more. While eating dinner, we talked about spicy flavors.

Like most immigrant kids, Mr. Lim did not like some traditional dishes—especially spicy foods, according to his mother. She tried many alternatives to make him comfortable with spiciness since most Korean dishes are based on chili. Mainly she concentrated on kimchi, which is Korean soul food. Interestingly, when his mother talked about kimchi and spicy flavors, Mr. Lim immediately remembered one dish: Spam with kimchi. When Mr. Lim was young, he had almost no Korean friends outside the family. Most of his life was thus conceptualized within an American-oriented culture and lifestyle. When eating dinner at home, however, he was expected to eat the Korean dishes that formed the family's staple foods. When Mr. Lim and his older brother refused to eat kimchi, Mr. Lim's mother made them a special treat: Spam with rice. Because Mr. Lim did not like spicy foods, his mom rinsed the kimchi and chopped it up with Spam, then pan-fried it with white rice. Mr. Lim remembers this meal as one of his favorite dinners of all time.

Immigrant children are often influenced by both their parents and their friends and neighbors. Thus, they often adapt to the new culture and cuisine while retaining some characteristics of the mother culture—such as eating Spam with kimchi. Clearly, Mr. Lim cannot cite an ancient culture or cuisine that lies at the center of his quest for Coke rather than kimchi. Yet the dinner of Spam and kimchi is an excellent example of his cultural identity—as well as of the compromises made to adapt, by both parents and children.

Another aspect of my interview with Mr. Lim offered fascinating insight into his food identity: PEZ. I did not much know about this candy, although my kids were aware

of it. Until Mr. Lim introduced PEZ to my kids, I had only seen the candy once when a neighbor gave some to my kids.

On that day, my whole family and I stayed at Mr. Lim's house before our morning interview. After the short interview, Mr. Lim was on his way to the restaurant when he proudly pulled something out of his Nike backpack: a bundle of PEZ candy dispensers. Mr. Lim's mother also seemed to know about PEZ. She pulled a small box out of the basement storage and said, "This is all you got." Mr. Lim's mom recalled that when Mr. Lim was a kid, he asked for PEZ every time they visited the supermarket. Since Mr. Lim now runs a restaurant and frequently visits food distribution stores, he can buy large quantities of PEZ for his children. He looked proud and happy to offer this symbol of a joyful childhood memory to his children and friends.

Based on the story Mr. Lim told me, he had great memories of PEZ, which seemed to act as a symbol of his childhood. Though different from the symbols most Koreans share, this aspect of Mr. Lim is a primary resource for analyzing his cultural identity.

In summary, the memory of certain foods found in Mr. Lim's life patterns seemed to be undergoing reproduction through his contextual surroundings. Kimchi, in particular, was used as a medium to symbolize Mr. Lim's experience as a member of the "second generation." At the same time, kimchi is a repository of his unique personal memory. Through this analysis, the roots of Mr. Lim's cultural identity are applied to the systems represented by Coke and PEZ. All these foods carry important symbolism. Yet their symbolism was seen in a completely different way by Mr. Lim than it was by Mr. Lim's wife and my own wife—for whom Korean culture is their fundamental symbolic identity.

**Expansion and Communication of Identity Through Food: Mr. Jung and Mr. Jang**

As members of the 1.5 generation of immigrants, Mr. Jang and Mr. Jung showed reasonably similar characteristics in their food-related culture. Due to the relatively small population of Koreans and Asians in the area where they currently reside, they visit New Jersey every month:

> Every time our family visits New Jersey, we are going to go shopping. Connecticut doesn't have a Korean market. So, whenever I come to New Jersey, I don't forget to visit H Mart or Hannam Chain to get some Korean products.
>
> Kimchi is the must-have item. These days, children eat kimchi. So we try to buy more, as much as possible. Other things, such as kids' sweets, Korean groceries, and (we) buy sweet potatoes these days. It is the symbol of winter food for Koreans. Especially the Korean sweet potatoes are truly sweet, yellow, and perfect size to eat. Although we can find some Japanese yams, which are very similar, at Whole Foods, it is not the same!

Both families cited kimchi as a symbolic food that represents their current cultural habits. Mr. Jang showed a deep preference for relatively common spicy foods. He enjoyed adding spicy sauce even when eating non-Korean foods like pizza and pasta. Mr. Jang seemed to establish his identity through the spicy taste of his food. In particular, he seemed to thoroughly understand the spicy flavors that have been popular in Korean society recently. He and his family visit Korea every year and have a good understanding of Asian countries like China and Vietnam. This can be interpreted as expanding their identity through spicy flavors.

For the same reason, Mr. Jang's family also prefers spicy food. His children eat the regular spicy Korean cabbage kimchi; they were the only family interviewed whose young children did so. In his testimony, Mr. Jang said that he consciously makes his children eat spicy foods since he believes eating spicy foods develops children's immunity and intensifies their overall understanding of Asian culture.

> I am glad that I moved to Connecticut. The house is big, and the child(ren) can jump and play freely. But the one thing I am missing is Korean food. Whenever I visit New Jersey for Sunday worship, (I) don't forget to go shopping. Mostly I buy kimchi, kids' snacks, and a variety of ingredients. Except for this, I am truly enjoying Connecticut life.

Mr. Jung, on the other hand, generally prefers junk food when left to his own devices. He acknowledged that much of the food he likes—such as hot dogs, hamburgers, pizzas, chicken, and ham—is not suitable for his health. He prefers junk food for lunch, while most dinners prepared at his home are of a typical Korean style. Mr. Jung's preference for Korean food is also strong; he said that when he missed Korean food, kimchi was the food he ate. Recently, however, *jjajangmyeon* (Korean-style Chinese black noodles) has emerged as his most memorable food. This seemed to be related to a childhood memory.

As with many Koreans of his generation, for Mr. Jung, *jjajangmyeon* carries powerful connotations of celebrating success and sharing a treat with his family. Mr. Jung seemed to have filed it in his memory as a treat that was eaten on special days, such as moving or graduation. Even in the early days of Mr. Jung's immigration, there was a significant incident where such a correlation was made.

Mr. Jung worked near Washington, DC, after graduating from his master's program in the United States. At the time, he did not have enough money for dating, so he and his current spouse used to go to a cheap Chinese restaurant. For Mr. Jung, Chinese food was the only Asian food that he could eat, in an area where Korean food was hardly to be found. These days, when he visits New Jersey, Mr. Jung can buy kimchi and other Korean ingredients at a large market. Yet he also wants to have *jjajangmyeon* to fulfill his nostalgia for those days.

Mr. Jang's immigration experience can thus be interpreted as giving him a broader understanding of Asian food culture in general. The habit of eating Chinese food began as a defense mechanism for adaptation to U.S. society as an immigrant, yet it seems to have expanded and developed his current eating habits.

In summary, Mr. Jang and Mr. Jung—who both immigrated to the United States as children—have made relatively extensive changes in their cultural adaptation around food. Their memories of Korean food culture, as represented by kimchi, are still shared within their families, but this is due to the preference of food culture. Their own dietary preferences, on the other hand, developed during the process of adaptation to the cultural system in which they had been transplanted. Mr. Jung can be analyzed as having undergone still another expansion process, in which Chinese food—as represented by fatty foods and refreshing tastes—became a nostalgic symbol within his diet.

**Apprenticeship—Education Around Food Rituals: Mr. Kim**

Many previous analyses have identified the significance of immigration duration, which is also relevant to Mr. Kim's immigration pattern. Yet Mr. Kim's food culture and memory process are somewhat unusual, as they have been transformed into new forms of social ritual. Unlike the other survey participants, Mr. Kim makes kimchi at home. This act of making kimchi has various side effects:

> Perhaps my family is one of the few families in the United States who make kimchi. Usually kimchi is made when there is no kimchi at home or ingredients such as cabbage or radish are on sale. To be honest, if my parent(s) did not send the ingredients from Korea, I probably (wouldn't) try to make it. I still miss the taste of my mom's kimchi. Because I use the same ingredients—such as red pepper powder, miso, and red pepper paste—the taste is almost identical.
>
> When we make kimchi, we usually share the work. I usually pickle the kimchi. My wife, on the other hand, makes the kimchi sauce. I personally like kimchi that is a little salty, but my wife says I have to eat it less salty for health.

> So, it's important to make perfect pickled kimchi. Nowadays, the kids are helping with small things, such as trimming the ingredients. I want to let my children know about the culture of kimchi.

Mr. Kim's act of making kimchi, as seen through the anecdotes he shared, could be interpreted in many ways. First, this physical endeavor generates an economic benefit. Mr. Kim usually cooks kimchi at home every three months. He said, "Usually, the event (as he calls it) occurs every time there is a cabbage or radish sale, or my refrigerator has run out of kimchi."

Second, making kimchi allows Mr. Kim to recreate his childhood memories via the smell and sight of the ingredients sent by his parents. If it were not for the stimulation of Mr. Kim's five senses during the arduous process of making the kimchi—a stimulation which, in turn, allows him to relive fond memories—he said he would not do it.

Finally, Mr. Kim believed that, through the series of processes involved in making kimchi, he can indirectly provide cultural education to his children. Mr. Kim said he encourages his children to participate in specific tasks while making kimchi. In the end, he believed that this participation would increase his children's education and understanding—and strengthen their Korean identity.

When making kimchi, Mr. Kim and his spouse have created a specialized division of labor. Mr. Kim prepares the essential ingredients for the kimchi, while his spouse is responsible for its taste. They have also created a new ritual to share with their family members: They simultaneously make *bossam* (boiled pork belly), a typical food that many Koreans enjoy while making kimchi.

Mr. Kim is thus playing a role in reinforcing his own and his family's cultural identity, while strengthening his memories through food recollection and ritualization. At

the same time, by making kimchi as a way to reinforce his childhood memories and re-establish his Korean identity, he has strengthened the symbol of kimchi. It is no longer a general representation; instead, it accumulates special meanings that are shared only by Mr. Kim and his family. In the end, the Kim family's kimchi—now given a completely new symbolism—is converted into robust symbolic rhetoric. This includes the involvement of the Kim children, which can be interpreted as an apprenticeship.

# Chapter VII

# DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I analyze the daily lives of the participants, specifically focusing on liminality and transformative learning among the various recognition tools. First, through liminality, which deals with the conversion of individual consciousness structures, I analyze how the tendencies of Korean fathers with different immigration trajectories can be interpreted through time, space, and circumstances. Second, the Korean fathers' immigration experiences can be interpreted as a part of their efforts to complete convergence into a particular culture (in this case, they would be normative Americans). Therefore, as minority immigrants, this group of Korean fathers was required to make a steady transition to their frame of reference. This series of processes required the same method as Mezirow's (1978) transformative learning. I analyze whether these four study participants completed transformative learning through their specific anecdotes.

## Korean Fathers' Kaleidoscopic Life: Family and Community Patterns

Regarding the educational aspect, the family is a dynamic human unit containing various elements of divergence (Leichter, 1978, p. 3), which are the essential components of human life—social, biological, and cognitive. Moreover, external factors such as the industrialization, socialization, and sophistication of the human learning process have

transformed not only the external concept of the family but also the internal characteristics that we regard as the cornerstone of human society.

On one hand, economic ties still play a dominant role in the family, according to the classification of both Engels (1884) and Lévi-Strauss and Shapiro (1956). On the other hand, gender-based social roles or biological classifications hardly explain the LGBT family that consists of a family unit without a traditionally fixed gender role schema. Alternatively, without rigorous gender roles, fragmented families such as single-parent families, adoptive families, and others can be classified as new forms of family nowadays. Besides, psychological needs such as the soothing and stabilization that come with emotional comfort may not meet the same prerequisites in the modern family.

Therefore, this research—the subject of which (Korean fathers) has been experiencing fundamental transformation both internally and externally—observed and examined individual family organizations to increase the overall understanding of the fundamental algorithm of the family. Based on this understanding, a new Korean immigrant was explored as part of a unique minority group that has not only disconnected and reformulated its characteristics but also maintained existent functional norms as a family.

For Mr. Kim, the family was all about the five members of his family—his three children and his wife. During the interview, he said he did not consciously think about family much. Interestingly, he has many friends from his workplace, college, and even his neighborhood. Thus, to him, the family is yet another social unit that has its function. As he said, “For me, the family is a kind of social obligation to be supported

economically and emotionally. Without my efforts, they are not going to survive in this country."

Among the interviewees, Mr. Kim, who has had a relatively short immigration period, said that a family functions as a home to which he can always return. Mr. Jung and Mr. Jang, who are 1.5-generation Korean immigrants, also had a strong concept of the family, tying more with *ga jok,* which is similar to the concept of a community in Western perspective. Mr. Jung has a sense of focus on Korea; he considered his family as his own identity. By contrast, Mr. Jang seemed to perceive the family as a general social structure. Interestingly, Mr. Lim, who is a second-generation immigrant and had a keen awareness about the unit of the family seems to follow more skewed to the Korean way of family: *sik gu*.

Mr. Lim had an exceptional understanding of the family. Last November, he took a family trip to the Caribbean Islands, during which he bought some gifts—three expensive wines: one for his father who did not drink alcohol, one for his elder brother, and one for the restaurant manager who covered work in his absence. About the latter, he said: "I treat him like family. For me, when I say you are my family, I mean that." However, right after receiving the wine, the manager left the job for a better-paying one. Mr. Lim said he experienced indescribable emotions at that time, feelings that were akin to losing a loved one.

Mr. Lim's perception of the family went beyond blood kinship. He defined family as a closer social bond, forming the most substantial axis of the social network. Moreover, he often used the concept of the family when emotional stability was

emphasized, such as a manager working in his restaurant who has spent more than a specific period or sharing certain events.

For Mr. Jung, the family was more about the immediate family, including both his parents, relatives (two brothers and one brother-in-law), and children. It was more or less the extended family conceptualization, which is known as the normative family perception in Asian discourse. In Mr. Jung's definition of family, blood ties were an essential variable. Notably, he seemed to have different layers of family classification. When he referred to his family in the United States, he mostly attributed it to a nuclear family structure: son, wife, and himself.

Leichter (1974) attempted to understand the family as an educator with a combination of formal and informal education. In this case, the family is not a supportive or subordinate educational factor for the standardized contemporary educational system. Instead, the family should be a central unit for education, which will be its fundamental characteristic (Leichter & Hamid-Buglione, 1983, p. 19).

In the case of Mr. Jung, the definition of the family took the form of emphasizing educational purposes to maintain an identity within a kin community. In other words, in order to be recognized as a member of a family, Mr. Jung insisted that his son be able to understand the values (his family tradition) shared by the family members. Moreover, his concept of family can be seen as a case of recognizing a social entity that shares this memory.

Furthermore, Leichter (1974) suggested that memory as an interactive process is the most crucial point of family education, as not only does it deliver encoded information to the successor, but it also acts as sustainable education that generates core

differences compared to traditional education. After Leichter, many promising researchers (Drummond, 1999; Rogers, 2007; Varenne, 2007) recognized the importance of family from an educational aspect.

To an extent, a family can be understood as part of cognitive memory storage, which can create social norms from the collective and personal memory and community of practice (Ackerman & Hadverson, 2000; Bauer & Shore, 1987; Leichter & Hamid-Buglione, 1983)—another human attempt to recollect moments. In this discourse, memory is not composed solely of individuals because the extended relations, including family, assist in infusing meaning and collective memories that become constituents of the fragmented memory. Therefore, the information is a pre-coded message that is constituted with universal and equal domain to the insider (Bruner, 1990), while memory processes using diverse parameters are affected by both society and the individual ego.

Such a description of the memory function sounds like the Möbius strip, but it is dynamic rather than stationary; for instance, Mr. Kim did not consider himself an American until he received government-issued identification and his previous experiences with American culture created a new value system that made him reside in the United States instead of any other "cool" European country. Mr. Kim's decision process was based on Korean culture, which focuses heavily on connections and is restrictive—a virtue not encouraged in America. In retrospect, Mr. Kim's decision to stay in the United States was egocentric, as his decision did not regard any pros of staying in the home country or peripheral circumstantial conditions such as his wife's opinion, economic and educational benefits, and the like.

On the other hand, Mr. Kim's decision also seemed to connect with the social hegemony of the times. What Connerton (1989) described as "social memory" (p. 1) is very much related to collective memory among immigrants in the United States, in the views of Terdiman (1993) and Olick (1999). According to Connerton, society creates a new form of memory that requires "commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices" (p. 2) to enhance the memorabilia as a cohesive social community (nation).

In Mr. Kim's case, previous experiences had greater value than others' opinions and comments when he needed to make decisions as a family leader. Moreover, particular bodily practices such as sexual deviation or discrimination can be a more effective collective memory. However, Mr. Kim's overall appraisal was more liberal and Americanized. Interestingly, such characteristics are normative among Korean immigrants in the recent era.

For Mr. Jang, a family is a social unit that needs his support. At the beginning of his marriage, his wife, who had less experience with American life, requested adjustments when they moved to New York City. He was supposed to take care of earning while his spouse focused on household affairs. When they decided to move to Connecticut, his obligation to the family became more significant.

In this context, Mr. Jang needed to provide support in parenting, particularly the educational aspect (which he regarded as his specialty), and in logistical demands such as commuting to school and going shopping. Fortunately, his spouse can now drive, so these demands have been mitigated. However, Mr. Jang still serves the family as opposed to being its head. Further, he fully accepts such a social role, not because society enforces it somewhat but because he is willing. Additionally, because he had experienced the

absence of a father figure for a long time, he regards himself as the breadwinner of his extended family.

Going back to Leichter's (1978) point, the educational aspect of family regains initiative when the concepts of advanced democracy and individualism become universal in human discourse. Education then seems to be more controversial than family as part of collective memory storage. Not only does it require covering a broad range of social and individual aspects, but it also demands multidimensional cognition as human interaction. Influenced by Dewey's (1902) understanding of education, which only encompasses a school and an institutional society, Cremin's (1975) approach to education had a greater variety of factors, including informal learning and lifelong learning.

Cremin (1976) defined education as "the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities, as well as any outcomes of that effort" (p. 27). According to this definition, all forms of knowledge transmission can be regarded as education. Therefore, we can say that the school setting is not the only place that delivers knowledge, as the family and other social units such as the community can also be a medium of transferring specific knowledge.

Intergenerational knowledge-sharing in family settings can be another type of education, as per Cremin's (1976) definition. Moreover, Leichter's (1978) emphasis on the educational aspect of the family does not focus solely on the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. Particular social circumstances such as migration and relocation can infuse a severing from the majority discourse and channel influence of the immediate or local family in unexpected ways. Further, reshaping group dynamics and reformation can be the result of transformation in family interactions.

Thus, when Mr. Kim's family moved out of their home country, they unplugged from the central cultural discourse of Korea and started to integrate into the new discourse in different social dynamics (in this case, the American cultural discourse). Moreover, Mr. Jung's and Mr. Jang's families also experienced a similar transition when they decided to reside in America. While such transformation requires time and collective as well as personal memories, it becomes conflated, influenced, and transformed by the ego.

To sum up, from the interviews, many aspects of modern family components, especially educational function and memory recollection, have been recognized as the core functions of immigrant families. Given that current immigrants tend to be more exposed to formalized cultural systems (another name for globalization) during their early life, they tend to experience less cultural disorientation, as peripheral memory and cultural orientation originate from diverse social and cultural interruptions that require the frame of reference to transform.

In these circumstances, families infuse a more educative aspect into their discourse, while the supremacy of cultural and social recollection dissolve. Besides, new forms of cultural and social connection create temporary fossilization of the ego (or personal preference) and fuse it into new ways of a hybrid ego-system between two heteromorphic social orientations (or adapted culture).

Finally, the family function has changed its boundaries, having influenced the social, cultural, and historical discourses of human endeavor. Therefore, this section examined past attempts to see the fundamental function of the family and its progress through social and cultural sophistication in modern society. The historical analyses of

Engels (1884), Lévi-Strauss and Shapiro (1956), and Parsons, Bales, and Olds (1956) indicated the family as the ultimate origin of a human group with a distinct function. Although some of the characteristics are still considered a function of the family, none of them stand out as the core element in human society.

## Liminality as New Korean Fathers' Structural Analysis

The previous literature review (Chapter II) presented a schematic of immigration's borderline social structure through the liminality concept. This time, I focus on Korean fathers' immigration phenomenon as a form of multilayered social structure. "Diaspora" is a Greek word that originally referred to Jews living outside Palestinian territories. This definition was extended to refer to any community of ethnic minorities who were deported from a country (Safran, 1991). The scope of the term has since expanded to include migrants and other groups moving away from the homes of their own will, in addition to ethnic minorities who have been deported (Tölölyan, 1991).

According to the expanded meaning of the word, various forms of Koreans cultural adaptation in the United States can be recognized as a diaspora. Park (2015) argued that religious groups could be indispensable social institutions in strengthening local communities for minority immigrants. He pointed out that the Korean community has formed and participates in many social gatherings, including religion-based communities and professional associations, to increase solidarity and their social safety net. Roh (2010) found this tendency to be higher among the elderly and those who have difficulty in English communication. Yoo and Chung (2008) pointed out the need to

broaden the scope of diaspora, which emphasized all immigrants currently living abroad as being vital resources in their home countries.

However, this concept of diaspora has its contradictions. The prerequisite of the diaspora is that individuals must settle down by relocating from their home country. The geographical migrant experience, which some people understand as the weakening of cultural bonds, may eventually form the infrastructure of culture. It is also an opportunity for developing cultural fossilization.

Diaspora represents a general tendency in the collective cognitive system of the minority. In this case, the multilayered structure that could be observed from the individual immigration trajectory diminishes its importance. Instead, collaborative perception gains a reputation as group solidarity. Moreover, the fragmentary alteration of group solidarity (massive immigration, deepening cultural diversification from immigration history, and sudden change in the political landscape) may be difficult to pinpoint.

However, liminality focuses on the specificity of each individual's perception change process. In particular, if liminality goes through the process of grouping the epistemology of human life rituals, it can be recognized as a diaspora. Assuming this analysis, Mr. Kim showed a cultural adaptation pattern that was completely different from the diaspora that is generally cited. Extra efforts to educate children about the Korean language by importing books and practice materials, using Korean names as the middle names of his children, and conducting a series of acts that encourage children's participation in making kimchi could be analyzed as more individual peculiarities in diasporic discourse.

This tendency was also observed in Mr. Jung and Mr. Jang, who are classified as 1.5 generation. Mr. Jang had a relatively weak identity as a Korean. He intensely emphasized his perception as a global citizen, that is, dominant cultural normality as a formal structure (child-rearing, language education, and ways of living). Moreover, he tended to recognize the object of Korea as a strategic competence of a child or oneself while forming a part of the diaspora of American culture.

Mr. Jung was the most typical diasporic respondent and can be considered a representation of the fossilization of Korean cultural identity. As a result, the higher the perception of American culture after going through the fossilization process of Korean culture, the stronger the regressive nature that has been identified (related to Korean language education for children, consumption of Korean food, etc.).

Mr. Lim, on the other hand, is a second-generation immigrant with a completed status of structural immigration. The normative fatherhood filtered through his father had a substantial impact on his personality that has remained characteristically in the process of cultural adaptation. At the same time, Mr. Lim's surrounding social composition emphasized an influential diasporic Korean culture (parents' life patterns, 1.5-generation wife's lifestyle, new jobs, etc.) and rigid recognition as a middleman or person completing the mobility experience.

Of course, it cannot be said that the diaspora is newly established through personal experiences. However, unlike definitive diaspora, which emphasizes the difference, it was indicated that Korean fathers' perceptions have changed because their awareness of self-ego is also very high. It is challenging to find prejudices about specific cultural perceptions. Instead, it can be seen that it is progressing as the liminality of a

frame that differs in time and space. For example, Mr. Kim was still socializing as a Korean by talking to his parents using video chatting and immersing himself in Korean culture through Netflix. At the same time, it seems that American society is in the process of raising children and socializing as a way to adapt to new cultural cognitive modes. Mr. Jung talked about the strengthening of Korean media, food, and social networking, which have resulted in his re-socialization of Korean culture. Mr. Lim was finally experiencing an entirely new way to transition culturally from Korea, modifying his structural surroundings.

In conclusion, the Korean immigrant fathers who were interviewed were completing various types of intrinsic immigration experiences composed of different times and spaces. If the diaspora eventually focused on cognitive methods at a certain point in their immigration process, it would be of distinct value in that they would understand their overall mobility as an extension of continuous change.

In addition, rituality, another attribute of liminality, has value as an important concept that defines the division of time in the process of ordinary life. It can be deduced that Korean fathers also acquire a liminal identity, emphasizing the spectrum of the ongoing process of cultural modification.

### Transformative Learning Dilemmas in Family or Cultural Adaptation

The anecdotes of the survey participants supported an analysis once again that the direction of their cultural adaptation was influenced by time, space, and the surrounding environment. However, the structure of human consciousness showed a tendency to be maintained within the working system of various thoughts originating from experience.

Among them, transformative learning was considered to have a significant influence on the external change factors that started from the social dilemma of forming a frame of reference, which is a part of the human meaning-making system. In other words, the frame of reference formed through human experience creates a different way of thinking or perspective on meaning. This series of processes suggests that the consciousness structure that creates a circular procedure through critical self-reflection is the ultimate learning method for adults (Taylor, 2007).

Such characteristics were found in various anecdotes revealed in the interview. For example, when Mr. Kim had a quarrel with his spouse in the process of making kimchi, he showed that he had achieved his goal of sharing, in a division of labor. At the same time, by using the participatory education method for children as another way of justifying the act (in this case, making kimchi), he could alter his wife's decision. In the end, Mr. Kim can be said to have solved the dilemma by pursuing a shift in the structure of consciousness focused on the transformative learning perspective. This shift in consciousness structure had a positive effect on their relationship with the child and their interpersonal relationship as a whole.

Mr. Jung also completed transformative learning, but through different means. To resolve a dilemma in his existing consciousness structure, he tried to make a new conceptualization of a social stigma (his immediate social group and his spouse insisted that using honorifics to address a child was unacceptable in Korean society). In other words, this conceptualization solved the problem by incorporating the semantic structure that accepts the robustness of a personal consciousness structure rather than deciding to change the existing one.

In the case of Mr. Lim, unlike the majority of Americans, which can be said to be his fundamental cultural arrangement, he was able to integrate transformative learning in the process of a growing consciousness of Korean culture learned through peripheral social circumstances, including family, occupation, and social networks. In his anecdotes, the food "Spam with kimchi" became one of his favorite foods, creating a convergence between kimchi, which was entangled with his intention to reject his own experience, and Spam, which had undergone positive awareness. In addition, his embrace of the new Korean food "dried squid peanut butter" indicated that Mr. Lim was a learner who embodied the flexibility of thinking while emphasizing experience and repeated attempts in his decision-making process.

Lastly, Mr. Jang showed the ability to realize transformational learning through personal experience and critical reflection through an evolution of identification with Korea → USA → Globalization. In addition, the flexibility of this thought was found to have a profound effect on his children's education.

Eventually, through the interviews, the respondents showed wise solutions to the dilemmas that had come upon them from different directions. One may interpret that this series of processes occurs frequently due to the specificity imposed by the social condition of immigration, and the range of change is reasonably extensive, resulting in increased flexibility in the overall consciousness structure.

In conclusion, I learned through this series of inquiries that the study participants seemed to undergo different types of transformative learning. In particular, those who internalized the change by external factors were relatively flexible to the changes in the family. Mr. Kim's ability to provide his workforce to make kimchi or to give a cultural

educational meaning to his spouse's making kimchi, and Mr. Jung's and Mr. Jang's different educational perspectives are essential clues to the flexibility of their mindsets.

By contrast, in some cases, it was still possible to identify a rigid habit of mind that hindered the transformation of the frame of reference. The cases of Mr. Lim's parenting method (the implementation of the grandfather's behavior as a model), or Mr. Jung (who used honorific language for his child) emphasized their existing habits of mind rather than a changed frame of reference. Of course, on the surface, these changes tended to be regressive from a developmental perspective. Considering the change in the structure of consciousness as a longitudinal point of view affected by time constraints, it is difficult to evaluate whether the current change was complete.

# Chapter VIII

# SUMMARY

In this study, I observed Koreans who recently brought their families to the United States or had begun them here. Unlike previous immigrant patterns, this new group of immigrants has a distinctive pattern of in terms of socioeconomic character and acculturation perception. Simultaneously, instant connectivity with the world creates a different community of practice among minor immigrants. Therefore, it can be said that we live in the century of a multi-local global society.

Similar to the general trends of minority immigrant research, previous Korean immigrant studies primarily concentrated on a marginal subpopulation, such as women, underaged children, and the elderly. In terms of gender, the research focused more on women than on men and mainly contributed to an increasing concentration on women and sexual minorities in the 1970s, when the trend toward minority studies began. Since the mid-20th century, pluralism and cultural specificity have shown the importance of establishing new facets of the immigrant study and applying alternative research methods. As a result, the culture of immigration for adaptation has become the subject of change, with the goal of recognizing the main cultural code of the migration.

However, as globalization began, and the concept of community expanded, individuals naturally internalized cultural adaptation in diverse ways. In this new

COVID-19 era, all human beings on Earth have lived and shared omnipresent time and near-identical geographical peculiarities.

In the discourse of multi-local globalization, Korean immigrant fathers stand at the center of change in two main ways. One is how they experienced a rapid social status fluctuation, both internally and externally. As shown in the online survey results, unlike existing Korean fathers' perceptions, they are recognized for their superficial father authority; in terms of specific content, however, they have a consciousness structure close to parental equality. Of course, equality here does not mean uniform equality, but equality of authority and status, depending on individual characteristics and family type.

Second, Korean immigrant fathers are being forced to transform continuously into a target culture as a means of normality. For example, the majority of the participants in the study changed their consciousness structure through immigration, yet cultural relativism and individualism emerged as the transformative aspect of cultural adaptation.

In my investigation, I used two different instrumental modes: an online survey, which focused on the generalization of the social phenomena, and interviews and participatory observations, which gathered empirical data from the target population. The online survey results provided a glimpse into the overall perception of Korean immigrant families in the United States, who were shown to maintain very open and organic family ties.

However, the survey results also suggested that the fathers' function as passive observer was still valid: for example, although the father's authoritative powers were accepted, the overall strength and degree of the authoritative influence were diminished.

Moreover, the Korean fathers emphasized their function as assistant participants rather than having a leading role in the division of household chores.

Qualitative interviews and observations were conducted with the Korean immigrant fathers, each of whom had a distinct immigration history. In addition to the four themes (identity, parenting, father awareness, and food rituals and memory) that emerged from the surveys, religion was a complementary interview theme used to assess the generational gap. As a result, the interviewees continuously made conscious changes through voluntary critical reflections and internalization of experiences.

First, Korean immigrant fathers formed a new channel of community discourse. Rather than focusing on differentiation and groups based on hierarchical and religious disparity, the data indicated the creation and disintegration of communities with specific intentions based on the needs of families and individuals. Second, fossilization, re-socialization, and liminality were identified according to the composition of the individuals' immigration history and the influence of Korean culture during and after immigration. Lastly, in the symbolic system of food, the cultural adaptation process was shaped by individual experiences and reflections that occurred during and after the transformation.

The overall significance of this study can be summarized in three ways. First of all, through the study, I was able to understand the life patterns of Korean fathers who resided in the United States. Among Korean immigrants, those who underwent personal life rituals or started legal immigration within the past 10 years or so exhibited a distinctly different cultural configurations from the fathers of the older generation. In terms of cultural adaptation, the older generation tended to focus more on the specificities

that appeared in the course of an individual life than on universality in directions that might lead to creating a dilemma.

Second, the social position of fathers was changing internally. The first set of personally accumulated memories that I analyzed revealed a shift away from their fathers' socially patriarchal perspective or dogmatic personality to a perception of fathers as active and subjective members of their family. This is not meant to ignore the influence of variables originating from external factors (adaptation to American culture, the adaptive structure of world view). However, internal factors are influential in that Korean immigrants cannot presumably change their fathers' perceptions without internal factors.

Lastly, the personal experiences or traits that appeared in the process of memory and consciousness have been essential factors in creating the fathers' qualities. The implication that all interviewees' perceptions of their fathers were a critical variable is significant. In turn, the degree of change in the perception of their own fathers was an essential variable in shaping the generalized character of the image of father each created.

# Chapter IX

# CONCLUSION

The greatest motivation for selecting the subject of this study was the dilemma that I face in my own daily life. Finally, I thought, on the day my first child was born in Lower Manhattan, I have a family in this strange and unfamiliar land called the United States. I asked myself what this child's identity would be—Korean or American. Even at the moment of naming, I found myself looking for the most suitable name by combining the time and date he was born, and I called my father, who lives 6,000 miles away. It was the first moment I had to admit how much underlying cultural practices impacted my daily life. It was overwhelming to fully grasp the idea of naming a child, including giving him or her a surname— my wife's dream was to give her family name to our kids (unlike in the United States, in Korea the father's children can only have his surname, and the spouse does not need to use the male surname). We chose to use both surnames and add the letter "I".

On one occasion, I asked my son which team he would support the United States or Korea if they played a soccer match. My son said he would support Korea without hesitation. Nevertheless, I was convinced that the United States would gain an entirely new meaning when it played against countries other than Korea, and I would watch him support the United States. At the same time, it was time to reconsider what I could do for

my children, who might face discrimination because of being Asian since COVID-19 has swept the world.

I was confused about what kind of father I am; for instance, a student who asked for help from my extended family regarded me as the head of a nuclear family. Additionally, the information limitations that minority immigrants experience and the unfamiliarity of the social environment to a marginalized person once again reminded me of what my father's role was.

Since I have met all of these fathers during my research and created extensive social solidarity with them, I can dream of a much more stable future. Even though I have a community where I can share a set of common values, I would say that this research has been a journey to find confidence in myself.

The data presented here were intended to explore the changes in immigrant fathers' consciousness structures based on various episodes in the process of immigration, rather than on personal details of individuals or the history of their immigration. Through this, the interviewees went through a cultural adaptation process, and I tried to assess various learning styles in terms of transformative learning. I also wanted to determine the specificity of socialization, or mental spaces where change can occur (Turner, 1987 explained this as liminality), based on contextual knowledge in the process of social restructuring.

Almost all interviewees who participated reported that they were able to reflect on themselves during the interview process and develop a more objective view of their immigration and resocialization process. They also found that they were able to discover

the specific patterns they could not previously find in their structure of consciousness and recognize the side effects that have occurred.

In closing, I would like to describe the research that is most necessary for the future study of fathers of Korean immigrants. First of all, in the study of Korean fathers, the problems in the family dictated by a specific group's life pattern are the most urgent research topics. In many immigration studies, the conflict between minority immigrants and other members who are represented as fathers or men in the resocialization process is shown as generating high social costs. In particular, even among Korean immigrants, conflicts within the family are severely damaging in some cases. Among Asian countries, Korea has relatively high rates of suicide and divorce, which likely reflects the function of the family as the smallest social community constituting human society and the last bulwark of humanistic nature. Therefore, proactive efforts to protect the family as a social unit will be necessary.

Second, a general study is required to understand the uniqueness of Korean fathers within the discourse of social change and advanced globalization. Although this was discussed at the end of this study, the fathers of Korean immigrants have undergone a form of social change that differs from merely accepting a global historical trend. In a highly patriarchal and masculine-oriented society, it is necessary to look more closely at the changes that these men have experienced in terms of gender roles: the strengthening seen in women's initiative in some areas—represented by the phenomenon of the "Tiger Mom"—may be taking the family beyond an equal society.

Finally, it is necessary to focus on the implications for resolving minority conflict in the United States. Continuing the previous theme, we are now living in a highly

multipolar society that displays a tendency to concentrate on polarized perspectives. Through the information revolution, humanity has come to believe that there can be multiple different antagonisms at either end of the continuum. Over the past several decades, we have indicated that we realize the value of the Arab Spring, the economic growth of Asia, and the qualitative and quantitative growth of third-world countries.

At the same time, we have overlooked the magnetism of the existing powerful dichotomous system. The American value system, seen as institutional civilization represented by democracy, the market economy, and the anti-Cold War-era, centered on socialism and community, are continually forcing us to choose between the two extremes. Subsequently, the study of Korean fathers can serve as a model for understanding the processes of evolution and reconciliation, seen through the lens of individual traits.

Although my results suggested a new approach to community and a nuanced approach to religion as a marker of Korean immigrant identity, I did not reach a definitive conclusion. Drummond's (1999) semantic approach to minority immigration culture provides an important direction for future research. The *Bo-dda-ri*, which is the semantic symbol of immigrant women Drummond (1999) indicated that various metaphoric symbols such as '*han'* dangerous memory, community, and religion could reformulate the meaning-making perspective. This series of processes would be possible when the father figure is established by an appropriate symbolic system.

I began this research with more curiosity than conviction about my hypothesis on the symbolic transformation of consciousness among immigrant Korean fathers, and I was apprehensive that I could analyze someone's memories objectively, without reference to my own preconceptions. Further, the fear that I would be sharing someone's

personal experiences led me to think that individuals are true masters, not participants or respondents. I have lived in the United States for a decade as a minority immigrant. During this period, several moments of anxiety established the justification of my views on immigrant life. In a small city of only 20,000 people, there are fewer than 2,000 Koreans, and only 20 Koreans in my immediate area.

Every humanistic study thus has the contradiction of reaching its conclusion with an incomplete methodology while exploring uncomfortable truths. Although this study attempted to resolve these extreme contradictions, I still have not observed 0.1% of the more than 200,000 Koreans living in Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York.

Fortunately, over the past five years, I have served with local journalists, students, and sometimes as a community volunteer, and in the process learned much about life that I had not previously known—not only the various forms of life, but also the fact that immigration is organized in diverse spectra of normativity between modern Koreans and Americans. The respondents' lives and cultural orientations may not need to fit into solely one category. Therefore, rather than focusing on the composition of the interviews or the superficial observations of the interviewees' cultural adaptation, I would like to focus on their various narratives and the actual content of their lived experience as immigrants. I hope this study will present an opportunity to transform the perspective of the Asian population in American society.

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